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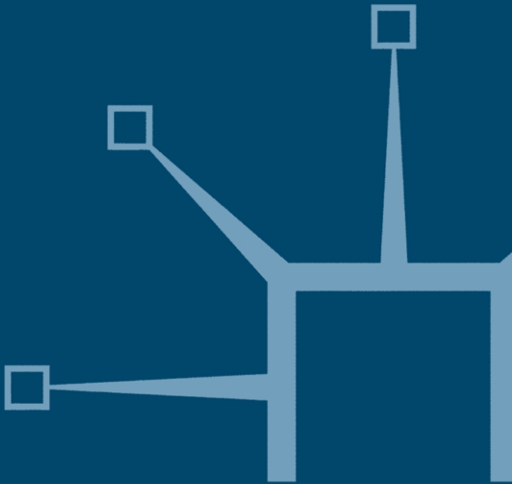
Russian Modernity

Politics, Knowledge, Practices

Edited by
David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis



Russian Modernity

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Russian Modernity

Politics, Knowledge, Practices

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1

Introduction: a Modern Paradox – Subject and Citizen in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Russia

Yanni Kotsonis

Most prominent among the themes traced in these articles is the transformation of people from subjects of an autocracy into citizens of a polity. Historical representations of Russia have often privileged authoritarianism as a continuity,[1] but this volume traces change that was manifest in the gradual internalization of authority, be it autocracy, one-party dictatorship, or one-person dictatorship. To put it another way, the authors examine the inculcation in the collective and the individual of the bases and principles of authority, which in the process made authority appear less external to the individual. And this process of internalization has long been recognized in other fields as a hallmark of modernity, and as a basis for comparative evaluation.[2]

The authors treat these transformations as ongoing and open-ended, a persistent realm of debate rather than a trajectory toward a particular end. Whereas historians of Russia have usually treated this indeterminacy as syncretism, contradiction, or an example of incomplete development toward a particular outcome,[3] the premise and point of this volume is that these were examples of paradox that was a component part of modernity in general, and a productive way to reevaluate the history of modern Russia in particular. Taken together, the articles give leave to interrogate three large oppositions that are central to virtually any interpretation of Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the geographic and symbolic contrast of East and West; the chronological divide of pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary; and the political antithesis of state and society.

Modernity as a comparative framework

The conclusion that Russia was a case of incomplete 'modernization' that structures much of the historiography rests on an idealized view of what sorts of transformations had taken place in the West.[4] While many if not most historians compare Russia's 'incomplete' experience with supposedly complete modern transformations elsewhere in Europe, historians of Western countries have long argued that paradox was endemic to the West and intrinsic to the Enlightenment. In Europe as a whole, ascription and external compulsion were present in the most extreme drives to instill consciousness and self-discipline, and movements to achieve unity in a given polity on the basis of universal principles were often enmeshed with seemingly arbitrary and particularistic criteria that limited the boundaries of the political nation.

Such are the contours – universal inclusion versus particularistic truncation – that underlie well-known debates on Western European development.[5] Examples abound. Biologically based definitions of citizenship remain prominent, most notably in Germany, limiting a universal conception of nation with the fixed and unchanging standards of blood-lines and heredity.[6] Universal, scientific truth has been used to affirm the irredeemability of whole categories of people and reaffirm familiar inequalities, be it in the eugenics movements that gained official recognition in much of the West between the world wars and persisted in the forced sterilizations of France, Sweden, and Norway into the 1960s,[7] or in the entrenchment of gender hierarchy in the very process of economic rationalization and scientific social organization.[8] Paradox was evident in the use of 'universal reason' and 'scientific truth' to limit the boundaries of citizenship and, indeed, humanity, most apparent and massive in the European imperial systems that globalized 'reason' and 'rationality' as part of a system of unidirectional rule.[9] And paradox persists in the much more familiar and current use of race as an official category in the United States, for in an order constituted on the principles of universal inclusion, virtually all sides in debate recognize the fundamental importance of unchangeable ascription in their understandings of the polity; and the dilemma – whether to accept race in order to combat racism, or to ignore race with the danger of allowing racism to go unchallenged – is highly germane to a discussion of modern paradox. The fact that Russia was an example of such paradox is precisely a reason to consider Russia not as a departure from a Western pattern, but as a reinforcement of the conclusion that paradox is intrinsic to modernity.

The first and obvious implication of this understanding of modernity is that it recasts the binary opposition of East and West in modern Europe – not to deny its relevance, but to reconstrue its meaning. The opposition is ubiquitous as a geographic and cultural boundary that either prevents comparison by casting Russia as *sui generis*[10] or allows us only to measure the distance fallen from a Western standard.[11] Rather than measure what was not achieved and conclude that Russia was less than modern, the important fact is that historical actors debated within the terms of modernity, and for this reason can be considered within the rubric of modernity. In this sense, 'the West' in Russian representations is important not for what 'the West' actually was, but because it stood to generations of Russians as a symbol of something larger and a euphemism or shorthand for specific goals – for our purposes, integration on the basis of universal principles, mobilization and mass politics, and an internalized awareness or consciousness in the individual of the legitimizing principles of authority. In other words, Russians participated in debates on enlightenment, universalism, and integration through a discourse on the West[12] – much as Western Europeans could address the same issues through an ongoing discourse on Russia.[13] This is not to deny difference, nor to lend equal weight to historical manifestations of modernity East and West; instead it is to suggest that we can identify difference within the shared comparative framework of European modernity.

Consider, by way of one major example, nationalism. The statement that Russia and the Soviet Union were never nation-states is true and a contrast to most Western European polities, but it is also possible to consider ethnic nationalism as a Western European manifestation of a broader drive to integrate, mobilize, lend coherence to, and create new conceptions of authority within a state. Russia, and indeed much of the globe, would not be simply non-nations; instead our attention shifts to the other rubrics associated with nationalism but not its synonyms, such as the state, citizenship, and social consciousness, that allowed Russians to pursue similar broad goals of integration in conditions of supra-nationalism, anti-nationalism, and multi-nationalism. Three of our contributions do just that, with Nathaniel Knight's examination of ethnicity in relation to cultural and political authority before 1861, Charles Steinwedel's study of the spread of ethnicity as an ordering principle in Bashkiria to 1917, and Terry Martin's study of nationalism in the larger binary of primordialism and social construction in the 1930s.

If we accept a modernity that was ambiguous and remove its teleology, then other boundaries that have so dominated the Russian field can also be reconstrued. The one is the chronological boundary of 1917 which has divided our field into two discrete halves, along with the lesser boundaries of 1861, 1905, and 1929. As all the contributors to this volume recognize, each date is highly significant, but the significance will vary with the historical questions posed. A study of the institution of serfdom ends logically in 1861,[14] but if we view Emancipation as one way to contemplate a modern question – the integration of peasants into a new polity – then the study can be located well past 1929 and forced collectivization.[15] A study of Russian autocracy might recognize 1905 as a first serious challenge and 1917 as a terminus, but a study in the new mass politics that challenged and overthrew autocracy might treat the revolutions as a departure (as does Charles Steinwedel in his contribution on ethnic politics in Bashkiria in the years 1861–1917) and continue into the civil war and beyond (as does Peter Holquist in his article on 'the new-style politics'). Frederick Corney's contribution treats the very events of October 1917 as a new ground for struggle over meaning and legitimacy that has raged ever since. And a study of autonomous professional organization will rightly end in 1917, but Frances Bernstein and Kenneth Pinnow suggest below that the rise of scientific and technical expertise in methods of government and social ordering continues well into the Soviet period.[16] By submerging each of these departures into the larger framework of modernity, the dates emerge more strongly as markers – rather than dividers – in a larger debate over the reordering of the polity, with increased recourse to rationalism and science to legitimize individual and collective action as well as the visions of the regime as a whole.

The third boundary that can be recast in this framework is the political, ideological, and power divide that separated state from society before 1917, Marxist and populist from liberal from the 1890s to the 1920s, and Bolshevik from non-Bolshevik in the Soviet era. As important as these differences were, one of the points made in this collection is that it is equally important to highlight the shared context in which all of these groups operated, drawing as they did on a larger realm of science, rationality, and enlightenment as legitimizing frameworks, in one or another transformative project, and in any regime. In my own study of the agrarian question, I make this point explicitly with reference to populists, liberals, and officialdom in the late Empire, and anticipate some characteristics of agrarian debate in the 1920s.[17] Pinnow and Bernstein achieve the same by highlighting the difficulty faced distinguishing the Bolshevik from the non-Bolshevik in the scientific and sociological literature of the 1920s, thereby making an apparent factual deficiency into an analytic point.

Finally, rather than focus on the absence of recognizable political democracy in any period of Russian history before 1991 – an observation that is true, but without an explanatory framework is also a truism – we suggest instead that democracy is one of many ways in which contemporaries conceived of participation. If we understand modernity as the pursuit of mass mobilization, mass participation in politics (voluntary or not), and integration into a larger whole, then the vote is only one of the ways in which historical actors pursued it; for the same was at issue in Russia under the Romanovs, increasingly in Bolshevik one-party dictatorship, and in Stalin's one-person dictatorship. Modernity was disputed and debated not only in the contained conditions of parliamentary representation, but also in some of the most violent periods of Russian history.[18]

It is important, as we delimit our bases of comparison, to stand back from the particulars of a given historical narrative and consider the larger framework that all these narratives shared. For the twentieth century did not simply witness the division of European polities and international politics into liberalism and illiberalism,[19] but also the proclamation, in different regimes and with different outcomes from the 1930s to the 1960s, of the achievement of universal societies, be it in Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, and the far more attractive and enduring welfare states of Western and Northern Europe.[20] But it should be clear by now that 'universal' does not necessarily imply inclusion and liberation, for what was universal was the application to all people of rational standards of measurement, often in order to exclude from the political nation (physically or in the law) or deny full citizenship on the basis of one or another universal standard: race in the Third Reich (with considerable participation by occupied Europe), gender in France until 1944, class in the USSR, labor in the British welfare system, and literacy and property in inter-war Hungary.[21]

The scale and insistence of violence and finally mass terror is a striking feature of modern Russia that requires explanation, and it is important to consider that it was precisely the confidence and certainty of scientific, universal truth, as applied to people, rather than simply a retreat into a peculiarly and exceptionally Russian political culture, that can account for the phenomenon. The task of historians would not be to measure the scale of violence as such – an approach which will lead to the true but unexplained conclusion that the Soviet period was more violent than the Imperial, and provide us with fact without real interpretation[22] – but to examine the frameworks that empowered authorities to lay greater or lesser claim on the lives of populations, and greater or lesser leave to practice violence. Rather than privilege violence as the standard by which we measure a polity, distinguish East from West, and separate Imperial from Soviet Russia, we can begin to explain violence by focusing on the larger and changing frameworks that legitimized and naturalized it.[23]

The politics of Russian modernity

Our two contributions on the first half of the nineteenth century not only reevaluate a period that has been sorely neglected in Western historiography, but also suggest that the period should serve as a point of departure for an examination of Russian modernity. This may seem odd, given the tendency to dismiss the Nicolaevan period (1825–55) as a break on progress and a reaction to inevitable change, but the authors point out in two important connections that even reaction required a framework of rationality and enlightenment for legitimation. Nothing could appear more retrograde than the practice of physically branding exiles, but Abby Schrader points out in her examination of the debates surrounding the Siberian exile system that arguments for and against branding were posed in modern terms: how the polity could be more perfectly ordered so that each individual could readily recognize the boundaries of the normal and the deviant, and whether physical marking rather than internalized practices and norms was sufficient to achieve that order. Physical branding of the deviant served multiple purposes (making the deviant visible, reaffirming or creating social boundaries of estate and legal ascription, and reinforcing the geographic boundary of Europe–Asia), but more importantly for our purposes, Schrader highlights the dissatisfaction the practice evoked among officials. For already discernible at this early stage was a more powerful drive to discipline the individuals in question and bring them, by way of internalized and mental transformation rather than bodily punishment, into the fold of a society in the making – not only as obedient subjects of the Tsar, but as 'conscious' and 'aware' individuals in a polity of which they were component parts.

That the universal could be used to reinforce the particular is a point made by Nathaniel Knight in his unprecedentedly meticulous attention to the terminology of ethnicity in the same period. For the Romantic preoccupation with *narodnost'*, or the nature of an ethnic people, merged into a specifically Russian preoccupation with the rifts separating educated society from the mass of the population. In a pattern that would be repeated in so many non-European countries in the twentieth century, the very use of the language of universalism could be treated as an attribute that separated the 'enlightened', the 'scientific', and 'the advanced' from the people they were categorizing.[24] The author concludes that this trajectory made Russia different from the integral nationalisms emerging in the same period in other European countries. But the other important point he suggests is that Russian educated elites, like their Western European counterparts, embarked on the more striking and universal process of making all populations national, as conservative, reactionary, and revolutionary assumed that, one way or the other, Russians could and should be understood as a nation. 'The Russian people' that gradually emerged from these deliberations may have been cast as different, but Russians would not be the first to claim their national distinctiveness by universal criteria; what was distinct was the implication for socially ordering and the weakness of a sense of political nation.

Like Knight, Charles Steinwedel suggests that the debates on nationality that we tend to associate with the period after 1917 in fact had a very long prehistory, making it difficult to dismiss the role of the Imperial state in the spread of national identity. After the Revolution of 1905, Steinwedel demonstrates, more and more people began to *act* national as well, suggesting a gradual internalization of ethnic identity – or at least the expectation that nationality was, should be, or would be internalized. In the understanding of historical actors, labels and identity moved from pre-modern ascription or categorization to Hegelian notions of a national spirit that existed and could be 'awakened' in all. Despite a tendency to view the Russian Empire as non-national, anti-national, Russified, or inimical to the very concept of nationality – after all, nationality implied a source of legitimacy and allegiance to something other than the autocrat – Steinwedel demonstrates that the language of ethnic difference permeated pronouncements official and unofficial, casual and more deliberate. In the tumult of the period, defenders of autocracy and revolutionaries alike came to grips with an expected 'national awakening' and attempted to link it with one or another vision of ordering. If they disagreed over whether the Empire would remain autocratic or open the door of political society to larger groups of the population, and if they disagreed over the primacy of a supra-national autocrat or a population loyal to a national entity, they could still agree that ethnic identity would be one of the structuring principles of a political or social order.[25]

If 1905 can be understood as a departure, then, it is in the spread and gradual universalization of categories that had hitherto been topics of academic debate, and their use in a new politics of mobilization. These universalizing drives, increasingly intensive and insistent by the turn of the century, are familiar to students who have noted the *dirigisme* of the Soviet period, but the point many of us are making is that they were specific neither to the Soviet period, nor to Russia and the Soviet Union. Rather, they were part of a larger phenomenon with precedents in Imperial Russia and parallels in other countries. Despite historiographic tendencies to isolate the USSR as 'ideocratic,' Peter Holquist understands ideology as a cosmology that was discernible at that time in all European polities. He does this by examining surveillance and food-supply practices developed before the Revolution of 1917, and among both Red and White administrations and armies during the Civil War. Their models very often were the liberal democracies of the West. The novelty of the Soviet regime, he argues, is not the very fact of surveillance, since all sides were interested in the dispositions and intentions of their populations, nor the very fact of violent and punitive food requisitioning policies, which all sides practiced. Rather, it was the new intensity, increased resources, and widened space that the Soviet regime provided for these projects. One might add that with the final elimination of legal estates and of the legal constraints that had fixed the identities and duties of subjects, the Soviet regime cleared the way for a more direct and insistent claim by political actors over their populations. If what sets the modern period apart is the fact of mobilization and the expectation that populations would consciously act out their roles – and therefore could be treated, more brutally than ever, as people responsible for their actions –

then the specific attribute of Bolshevism is the use of class and especially conflict as an organizing principle, and a more intense belief that people's actions reflected their class dispositions.

One did not have to be Bolshevik to subscribe to transformative projects we associate with Bolshevism, a point made by the authors who examine both Communist and non-Communist specialists in the 1920s who were trained under the old regime, but who willingly and fervently dedicated themselves to the cause of 'science' as a concept for the ordering of society, of gender, and of nationality. For this shared commitment to science animated both Bolshevik and non-Bolshevik in the 1920s, even as we recognize that the final word belonged to one party in a one-party dictatorship. To be sure, the Bolshevik dictatorship was a fact, but dictatorship alone cannot explain the participation by ever widening groups of the population; and characterizing the regime as a 'partocracy' treats as a constant an institution always itself in change, decimated by civil war, repeated purge, and terror. Modernity as a conceptual framework does not belittle the coercive boundaries imposed by the party, but it allows us to submerge Bolshevism into larger trajectories, a larger ethos, and a more encompassing analytic rubric. It should be considered, in particular, that this one-party dictatorship allowed for – indeed demanded – citizenship, insofar as citizenship could be understood as forced participation in the construction of an integrated, scientifically understood society rather than simply the conferral of rights. And one of the fundamental tensions of the Soviet period was a conception of class difference and exclusiveness as represented in the party, a party which at the very same time insisted on the universal inclusion and the universal participation implied by citizenship in the state.[26]

The emergence of the 'social' is central to the work of Pinnow. In his examination of forensic medicine, sociological understandings of suicide, and its European and Durkheimian roots, the author shows how the seemingly innocent process of quantifying and categorizing suicides was a vehicle to comment on the nature of the Soviet system, lay claim to the individual as a component part of the new society (hence a suicide was a loss to society sooner than a personal tragedy), and ultimately prescribe social policy. Understood against the background of apparent disintegration during the Civil War and a much longer period of segregation in separate estates, Pinnow is considering the invention and then active construction of a society with patterns that transcended class, estate, occupation, and gender – and therefore of a society that was integrated and could be understood as a single entity with its own social logic and social patterns. At issue, ultimately, is our understanding of social history: rather than treat the social as pre-existing and as the sum of all social categories, Pinnow argues that social history is in large measure the process of constructing a sense of society – as was accomplished by historical actors in Western Europe since the nineteenth century.[27]

Another point, to which Frances Bernstein gives pride of place, is the tension between the social and the biological, as scientists looked in the body to understand the social (or anti-social) activity of their subjects. The paradox, as Bernstein argues, was most apparent in the glandular surgery by which specialists attempted to enforce social conduct. Her immediate point is part of a larger argument about Russia in the 1920s: if retreat from full women's liberation is one way of understanding Bolshevik policy in the 1920s and 1930s, thereby revealing considerable ambiguity about gendered attitudes toward citizenship and rights, Bernstein suggests that this ambiguity was present from the early 1920s, was shared by a wide spectrum of professional and social commentators, and was part of a much larger contradiction between social and biological determinism. If the use of scientific language and knowledge lent authority to basic gendered bias, it also highlights the determination of professionals and political leaders alike to redeem deviant populations and reclaim them for 'normal society'.

Bernstein also points to a larger tension that was never resolved in the Soviet regime (and nor, arguably, in any other). For the Enlightenment concept of the fluidity, plasticity, and redeemability of mankind and of all people was awkwardly paired with a persistent belief in primordial, at times biological and essential, characteristics of human beings. For Bernstein, it was manifest in the attempt to impose 'normal' social conduct by use of surgery, and for Pinnow in the search for organs and glands that made one prone to suicide. The same paradox could be extended backward to Holquist's emphasis on internalized class consciousness applied to people who clearly did not share the language of class. The same tension was apparent in the politics of nationality in the 1930s, as evidenced in the marvelously paradoxical question posed in the contribution of Terry Martin. As late as the 1930s, nationality was considered to be socially determined, and professional ethnographers and policy-makers left the choice of one's nationality to the respondents of censuses. Yet at the very same time nationality assumed an immutable, primordial quality that led, ultimately, to fixed national identities and the collective punishment or reward of nationalities during and after the Second World War – from the deported Chechens, Tatars, and Greeks to the glorified Ukrainians, Russians, and Belorussians.

This paradox extends beyond nationality, and goes to the very heart of the Soviet experience. It has confounded both would-be sympathizers who saw their vision of socialism so horribly corrupted in the slaughter of collectivization, the Great Purges, and the repression of nationalities and religions, and critics of socialism who saw their vision of the Enlightenment assume a trajectory that seemed such a perverse copy of the progress they believe occurred in Western Europe. This requires attention to the imagined timelines with which contemporaries operated, where large historical canvases informed short-term political decisions and the everyday politics of labeling and identity. A belief in progress, change, and redeemability bequeathed by the Enlightenment, mixed with a striking confidence in the 'reality' of the categories at play, a willingness to act on them, and an overriding drive to achieve social harmony and unity quickly and, if need be, violently. In the long run, an 'enemy of the people' was an enemy of the people due to class belongings and influences, and an 'enemy nationality' was easily understood as a historical construction, correctable in the long-haul (not least through the most extensive complex of prisoner camps in the world); but in the short run the 'enemy' was intolerable in a society where the achievement of social cohesion was the goal of the first order, and where 'scientific socialism' lent breathtaking confidence to the essentialism that the categories acquired. The recognition that a category was socially determined did make it less real at any given moment; and the fact that its existence could be understood scientifically made it, if anything, more real a category for analysis and action.

The tendency in the historiography of Russia has been to treat these categories – especially class and Soviet identity – as ideological inventions imposed unidirectionally by a discrete power, but our last three contributions suggest that the categories become real as they are reflected, produced, and reproduced in the individual rather than in external and artificial rhetoric and propaganda. Frederick Corney achieves this by thoroughly shifting our understanding of the founding myth of Soviet Russia. At issue is the struggle to ascribe meaning to October 1917, and he delivers a subtle and multi-layered argument. Corney describes the very process by which contemporaries debated the meaning of a fall day when several people seized control of the Winter Palace, competing to label it a coup, a revolution, or a storming; and he brings out the utter lack of certainty among Bolshevik activists as to whether a 'storming' à la Bastille, a coup, or a revolution – or indeed some other event altogether – should be cast as the deciding event. His immediate point is that the 'revolution' narrative, deliberately modeled on the French revolutionary narrative, was the most emotive and able to explain people to each other and to themselves – which was, after all, the importance of a master narrative, so that October 1917 has become, for the individual and the historian, the end of one period and the starting point for the next. Most important among his implications, and regardless of the position one took on October, is the way individuals inserted themselves in a narrative, participated in a debate, and, ultimately, made themselves relevant by ascribing meaning to events and to themselves.

Such analysis should put in question our understanding of 'resistance' as a basic rubric of historical research and writing, for apparent resistance can reinforce rather than challenge the larger political framework. Golfo Alexopoulos makes this point in her discussion of denunciation in the 1930s. For if Alexopoulos's work is suggestive of ways in which official categories of citizenship could be manipulated to the benefit of the accused, more impressive is the way in which those same categories were given meaning and resonance by their very use. For the individuals in question deflected an accusation by accusing others, and far from questioning the legitimacy of authority, they confirmed it. Rather than view denunciation as part of a process of repression and atomization (an understanding not excluded by her work), Alexopoulos suggests that the language of terror was a constitutive and productive terrain where individuals affirmed their identity, proved themselves as deserving citizens, and reinserted themselves into official categories.[28]

These contributions force us to reconsider our understanding of Soviet rule as a unidirectional process superimposed by a separate and superordinate authority, and Jochen Hellbeck asks us to consider where identity and the self are formed in any polity. In the diaries of political and social undesirables, individuals attempted to rehabilitate and define themselves to their own satisfaction by inserting themselves in a dominant narrative of Soviet progress and consciousness. Most striking is the fact that the diarists wrote for themselves, with entries that would have been incriminating if discovered by the wrong people. Nevertheless, one diarist could only explain himself *to himself* by using the frameworks of self-redemption, self-realization, enlightenment, consciousness, and class provided in the official rhetoric. If at first glance the story seems peculiarly Soviet and 'totalitarian', Hellbeck implicitly challenges the distinction between public and private realms not only in the Soviet case, but by drawing on a rich literature from Western Europe that problematizes the same opposition. It is a marvelous study of the way in which a system, polity, and society are produced and reproduced within the individual without the overt and crude coercion that also formed a component part of the Soviet system.

Notes

I wish to thank David Hoffmann for his comments on an earlier draft of this introduction.

1 The most explicit cases in point are Leonard Schapiro, *The Origins of Communist Autocracy*, second edn (London, 1977), and Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York, 1974) and the latter's more recent works on the Russian Revolution.

2 One of the more satisfying renderings is Anthony Giddens', whose discussion of the self-reflexivity of social categories suggests the ways in which the external (social, state) is negotiated within the individual and made real. See, for example, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, 1990). For a historical rendering, see Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet from Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago, 1975).

3 The teleology inherent in this approach has produced some of the most interesting works to emerge from the 1960s to the 1980s. Examples include Alfred Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Late Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982) within the trajectory of caste-to-class, as well as Gregory Freeze, 'The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm in Russian Social History', *American Historical Review*, v. 91 (February 1986), a methodological treatment of the same trajectory. Leopold Haimson, to whom the entire field is indebted, introduced the construction, expressed most recently in 'The Problem of Social Identities in Early Twentieth Century Russia', *Slavic Review*, v. 47 no. 1 (Spring 1988). For explicit statements of 'missing elements' approaches, see Edith Clowes and Samuel Kassow, eds, *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1991), where the absence of 'civil society' in late Imperial Russia is a point of departure. Harley Balzer, ed., *Russia's Missing Middle Class: the Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, NY, 1996), is even more explicit.

4 The most articulate and comprehensive statement of the 'incompleteness' thesis is von Laue, *Why Lenin? Why Stalin?* (Philadelphia, 1964), recently updated as *Why Lenin? Why Stalin? Why Gorbachev?* From an

economic perspective, see Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), where Russia is the prototype of 'Eastern backwardness' in contrast to English industrialization. Similarly, see Barrington Moore, *Terror and Progress USSR* (Cambridge, MA, 1954). For two critiques of modernization, see Dean Tipps, 'Modernization Theory', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1973), and Edward Berenson, 'The Modernization of Rural France', *Journal of European Economic History*, v. 8 (Spring 1988), which is a critique of Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford, 1976).

5 For the largest statement, see Arno Mayer, *Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York, 1981). But the same could be said of the ongoing *Sonderweg* debate in German historiography, where a failure to include and modernize becomes a basic contradiction and causal explanation of fascism. See also Charles Maier, *In Search of Stability* (Cambridge, MA, 1987) where the persistence of particularism is considered in inter-war Europe and presumably ends after 1945. Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity* (New York, 1993), traces a similar paradox in inter-war Germany, but doubts whether 1945 signaled the triumph of universalism; instead the inconsistencies are an open-ended and productive framework for her analysis.

6 On the origins of citizenship law, see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

7 See Mark B. Adams, ed., *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (New York, 1990); Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA, 1988).

8 Laura Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1919–1939* (Ithaca, NY, 1995).

9 On the Enlightenment use of reason to exclude from the political nation within Europe, see Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1981). On the ambiguities of 'citizen' and 'man' in 1789, see Marcel Gauchet, 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man' in François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds, *Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (London, 1989); on the ways this ambiguity unfolded in succeeding decades elsewhere, see Michel-Rolphe Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995), showing how a narrow vision of citizenship had implications for rule and narration beyond Europe; and Kotsonis, 'A European Experience', in Lynn Hunt, Jeff Wasserstrom, and Marilyn Young, eds, *Human Rights and Revolutions* (forthcoming, 1999), which places Russia in European context. On the 'rationality' and 'humanism' of Imperialism, see Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire* (New York, 1981); and Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York, 1965).

10 Richard Pipes achieves this by focusing on the distinctiveness of Russian authoritarianism before and after 1917; and Martin Malia achieves something similar by terming the Soviet Union uniquely 'ideocratic' – despite his recognition that all the 'ideologies' he discusses originated from the West. See *The Soviet Tragedy: a History of Socialism in Russia* (New York, 1994).

11 Besides the works of von Laue and Gerschenkron, see the recent Daniel

Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, 1989), where the march of social, economic, and political progress stops – depending on the author – around the Elbe, Oder, or Vistula.

12 Esther Kingston-Mann, 'In the Light and in the Shadow of the West: the Impact of Western Economics in Pre-Emancipation Russia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v. 33 no. 1 (1991).

13 Larry Woolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994); Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997).

14 Daniel Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855–1861* (Cambridge, MA, 1976); Terence Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge, 1968).

15 George Yaney carried out such a study in *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861–1930* (Urbana, IL, 1982).

16 The first large statement of this case, which in many ways anticipates later periods, is John Hutchinson, *Politics and Public Health in Revolutionary Russia, 1890–1918* (Baltimore, 1990).

17 Kotsonis, *Making Peasants Backward* (London, 1999).

18 For an understanding of mass mobilization and mass participation as modern politics, see Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece* (New Haven, 1993). In this connection, it is noteworthy that Arno Mayer's indictment of pre-1914 politics in *Persistence of the Old Regime* rests in part on the observation that conservatives successfully mobilized massively to a pre-modern, quasi-feudal cause; but it is also true that all sides in European politics conducted mass mobilizations, which seems to me the point.

19 This seems to have been one of the lasting contributions of the totalitarian school to the historiography. Yet it has also appeared in much more sophisticated form in the works of Laura Engelstein. In my reading of her work – and taking only one strand of a multifaceted approach – Russia until 1914, not to mention after 1917, was distinct in the absence of entrenched liberal institutions and practices, especially autonomous professions and the rule of law. See 'Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia', *American Historical Review*, v. 98 no. 2 (April 1993).

20 Stephen Kotkin uses the welfare state as a way to understand Stalinist Russia, and seems to suggest the welfare state as a comparative framework, in *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), introduction.

21 On universalism thus conceived, see Kotsonis, 'A European Experience'. On the ways the franchise was limited in Hungary, see Andrew Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825–1945* (Stanford, 1982); on the labor principles that militated against women in Britain, and more generally on gender as a criterion in welfare policies, see Koven and Michel, eds, *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare State* (New York, 1993); and Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State* (New York, 1995).

22 Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill* (Princeton, 1993).

23 Timothy Mitchell, 'Everyday Metaphors of Power', *Theory and Society*,

v. 19 no. 5 (October 1990), argues that the distinction between coercion and consent is illusory. For my purposes, it is important that he highlights the larger ideology which makes both possible.

24 Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies of Society and History* (1990); and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian" Pasts?', *Representations* (Winter 1992).

25 Consider, in this connection, Stolypin's attempt to combat Polish nationalism in Russia's western provinces by encouraging Russian ethnic identity; for the result was a nationalist, chauvinist movement encouraged by a purportedly anti-national government. See Robert Edelman's article in Haimson, ed., *The Politics of Rural Russia* (Bloomington, IN, 1979).

26 A point I develop in 'Poddannyi i grazhdanin: Nalogooblozhenie v Rossiiskoi imperii i Sovetskoi Rossii i ego podtekst', paper presented at the Conference on Russia in World War One, St Petersburg, June 1998 and published in *Rossiia* XXI (April 1999).

27 Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 1990); and implicitly Theodore Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking* (Princeton, 1986).

28 For 'resistance' in pre-revolutionary context, as well as some of the theoretical literature, see Kotsonis, *Making Peasants Backward*, ch. 5.

Part I

Toward a Modern Politics: Consciousness and Universalism in Pre-Reform Russia

2

Branding the Exile as 'Other': Corporal Punishment and the Construction of Boundaries in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Russia

Abby M. Schrader

One of the earliest Russian 'criminals' subjected to exile was not a person, but the church bell of the town of Uglich. In 1591, Tsar Boris Godunov attempted to reassert order after an insurrection broke out following Tsarevich Dmitrii's murder. Godunov executed many of Uglich's residents, imprisoned others, and exiled about one hundred to Western Siberia. Godunov also punished the town's church bell. The bell was lowered, publicly administered 120 lashes, and its 'tongue' (clapper) was excised. Finally, the bell, along with Uglich's citizens, was banished by officials. They forced the exiles to drag the bell across the Urals; in Tobol'sk, Military Governor Dmitrii Lobanov-Rostovskii registered the bell as 'the first inanimate exile from Uglich'.[1]

By corporally punishing and exiling an inanimate object, officials demonstrated that exile functioned not merely as a means of ridding the state of insurrectionary people. In Russia, bells were significant. They stood in the church belfry in the town's central square and organized its social life by gathering its inhabitants to celebrate important events: births, marriages, funerals, and in the 1591 case, insurrection. By punishing the bell, the state symbolically disrupted the course of daily life in Uglich, severing its residents' connection to religion and the family. By exiling and placing on the margins that which was absolutely central to the social organization of the town, officials took control of the center once more. Rather than simply destroying the bell and Uglich's inhabitants, officials whipped and branded them to reinforce behavioral norms at a time when deviance threatened order. The symbolic value of this punishment resided in the fact that exiles served as a constant reminder of the boundaries erected by the autocracy. While exile became an increasingly important component of the Russian penal system during the sixteenth century, it did not supplant floggings and brandings but supplemented corporal punishment.

The goal of the Russian penal complex was to socially, physically, and geographically alienate convicted criminals and social misfits from society. Authorities attempted to use exiled convicts symbolically, as negative 'others' against whom they defined what it meant to be a Russian subject. Those subjected to exile at hard labor were individuals who had committed serious crimes, such as murder, arson, robbery, and brigandage, or who were repeat offenders. Consequently, the state deprived these criminals of their property, declared them civilly dead, and banished them to Siberia to perform hard labor. Until the late eighteenth century, exile at hard labor supplemented harsh knouting and facial disfigurement for members of all social groupings in Russia. Convicts sentenced to exile at resettlement had committed offenses of a somewhat less serious nature; while those criminals were publicly beaten by an executioner who wielded a three-tailed lash, they were dispatched to Siberia without facial branding.[2]

From the moment convicted criminals were dispatched to Siberia, their everyday life was disrupted. Criminals undertook the journey on foot, traveling 'thousands of versts, barefoot and in leg shackles, they would walk year round: during the heat of the summer, during spring rains, in the mud of autumn and during scorching winter frosts'.[3] If one convict fell ill, the others had to await his recovery before resuming travel. If one convict had to relieve himself in the middle of the night, the others had to be woken to accompany him.[4] Once in exile, convicts looked forward to a life in which authorities precluded them from most rudimentary pleasures.[5] Every exile wore leg fetters for the duration of his or her sentence; more serious criminals were also compelled to wear arm shackles and chains. Fetters weighed between eight and ten pounds; after several years, convicts' legs withered under this weight and the imposition of relative immobility.[6]

But officials sought to alienate exiles in a manner that was more than visceral and geographical. They also stripped exiles of the privileges attendant to the status (*sostoianie*) that they occupied in Russian society. In other words, the exile was no longer a member of the nobility, merchantry, *meshchanstvo*, peasantry, or any other estate. Moreover, the state also rent the convicted exile's social and familial ties: any possessions passed into the hands of heirs who did not voluntarily accompany the convict to Siberia. In cases where children and a wife or husband chose to follow their spouse or parent into exile, these voluntary exiles also sacrificed their status, privileges, and property.[7]

Exiles who took flight presented a particular affront to authorities for they refused to occupy the physical and symbolic space of exile in a coherent and unambiguous manner. When an exile escaped, he or she denied the state's power to punish and capacity to define his or her status. In the early nineteenth century, officials at the center and in Siberia became increasingly concerned about this threat and instituted further regulations to control it at the same time as they sought to refine penal legislation for the empire. The challenge presented by escaped convicts was potent not only because fugitives manifested overt resistance but also because Russian officials themselves were conflicted about how to imagine Siberia, the exile population, and the role that punishment played in constructing their visions of Russian society.

In this essay, I open by discussing how the Russian penal complex grew increasingly complicated during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the second section, I argue that the disorder of the penal complex was compounded by a confusion of boundaries presented by the liminal status of Siberia and the exiles banished there. Finally, I move to a discussion of how the combined force of these problems informed how officials dealt with the problem of exiles' escape from Siberia and vagrancy in the center. I explore how officials devised the policy of literally branding individuals in order to contain the disruptive potential unleashed by flight and how the tensions that characterized officials' views concerning branding frustrated these efforts from the outset.

The shifting penal complex in Imperial Russian society

Corporal punishment, physical mutilation, and Siberian exile functioned as a penal complex in late Muscovite and early Imperial Russia. In combination, these three forms of punishment served as a mechanism by which autocrats constructed social boundaries by marking those who transgressed the parameters of acceptable behavior. Officials sought to viscerally, socially, and geographically alienate convicted criminals. Executioners publicly knouted or lashed convicts and rent their nostrils or disfigured them in other gruesome ways; courts subsequently dispatched beaten criminals to hard labor in the mines and factories of the Siberian realm.

Ultimately, however, officials were only marginally successful in their attempts to erect solid boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, between upstanding subjects of the Russian crown and those deemed social misfits, and between the Russian center and Siberia. Two interconnected problems plagued authorities. First, the penal complex pioneered by sixteenth-century autocrats and perfected by seventeenth-century ones began to fragment during the eighteenth century. The evolution of the state itself and official attempts to reconstitute Russian society contributed to this breakdown. In 1785, Catherine the Great promulgated the Charters to the Nobility and the Towns in her effort to forge estates that would help her construct and govern a well-ordered and well-policed state. By granting nobles and first- and second-guild merchants an array of essentially negative privileges – including exemption from flogging, the capitation, and recruit duties – Catherine hoped to fashion estates whose members would internalize a sense of dignity and the importance of law and who would consequently be conscious of their own role and investment in transforming the empire into an efficiently regulated state.[8]

Yet, that Catherine extended the privilege of exemption from corporal punishment to members of these elite social groupings disrupted the functioning of the old penal complex; for the first time, the autocrat suggested that Russia was too complex to accommodate a single language of punishment. Rather, Catherine's division of Russian society into two groups – those subjected to and those freed from floggings – implied that the state needed to construct varying penal systems. This effort culminated in the establishment of two ladders of punishment: the penal code draft of 1803 advanced that elites should be subject to one ladder of punishment – a rehabilitative one – whereas the lower estates should continue to be flogged and branded. Although the State Council and Alexander I rejected this draft, these two ladders became the backbone of the 1845 Codex of Punishments. Moreover, this situation was rendered even more complicated because the estates created by Catherine were open: individuals ennobled themselves by advancing through the Table of Ranks, entered into or exited from the first two guilds for economic reasons, and various groups gained the privilege of exemption from floggings through education or service.[9] Thus, although officials sought to use the privilege of exemption from flogging to foster clearer divisions between elites and commoners, these exemptions oxymoronically had the effect of confusing and possibly even rendering invalid the older penal complex: the scars left by the knout, the lash, the facial brand, and the rending of nostrils could no longer serve as literal and visible markers of criminal status. Instead, the state transported a good number of convicts to Siberia whose physical bodies resembled those of non-criminals.

At the same time, a second process was at work. During the early nineteenth century, the geographical boundaries of the Russian state grew blurrier. Officials began to question the status of Siberia itself and that of the convicts banished to exile in this realm. From the mid-eighteenth century, as autocracy was developing in the center, exploration of Siberia proceeded and the government began to consider this territory to be part and parcel of Russia itself. Mikhail Speranskii's 1822 reforms divided Siberia into two regions, one in the east and one in the west, and sought to introduce bureaucratic agencies by which to govern it.[10] Simultaneously, the Siberian population underwent exponential growth: the Russian population of Siberia nearly doubled between 1770 and 1820 and grew by another 40 per cent between 1820 and 1852.[11] Voluntary peasant flight from serfdom in Russia; the need for manpower to exploit Siberia's resources; the expansion of commercial ties with China and other countries in the east; and the massive development of the exile system all contributed to this phenomenon.[12]

That Russian officials increasingly deemed Siberia part of Russia, and specifically, a region that promised especial fiscal and political advantages for the Russian state further complicated matters. On the one hand, they felt Siberia was Russia's 'other': it was foreign, wild, barren, and outlaw. Yet, simultaneously, officials considered it absolutely essential to the 'unified Russian state'.[13] As Infantry General Annenkov asserted in 1852, 'Siberia is, for us, not only a place that is other . . . Siberia is part of Russia, and as such, is one of her most important parts. Completely adjacent to Eastern Russia, Siberia is both geographically and politically part of the East, and is its most significant part. . . .'[14] This raised the following question: if Siberia was a part of Russia, then were its banished inhabitants still members of Russian society? Officials began to work out this issue in the mid-nineteenth century when they discussed whether Siberia and its exiles came under the jurisdiction of the Empire's general legal code or whether they should be differentially treated.

Exile had been established in Russia to a limited extent by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The rapid extension of the exile system was facilitated by the expansion of the Muscovite State and, later, the Russian Empire eastward, beyond the Urals, and southward, into the Caucasus. By the mid-seventeenth century, exile became a key component of the Russian penal system. The conquest of the vast but sparsely populated Siberian territories coupled with the need for manpower to mine its resources made exile a viable alternative to the death penalty. The concept of using exiles as a source of labor was given formal articulation by Peter the Great in his institution of *katorga* (hard labor); this system was expanded further when Elizabeth abolished capital punishment.[15] In 1662, between 7500 and 8000 of Siberia's total population of 70 000 had been sent there by judicial exile.[16] During the early nineteenth century, this number increased astronomically: from 1823 through 1861, 39 601 men and 4330 women were exiled at hard labor in Siberia. Another approximately 250 000 people of both sexes were exiled at resettlement, some judicially and some by administrative order.[17] Thus, exiles of one sort or another constituted between one quarter and one third of the Russian population of Siberia at mid-century.[18] Seventy-eight per cent of those exiled between 1827 and 1848 had committed violent crimes: 40 600 were thieves, 14 531 were murderers, 5068 were armed robbers, 2400 were arsonists, and 2411 had engaged in insurrection.[19]

Central and Siberian officials were faced with a complicated predicament concerning exiles' status. Despite desires to stringently regulate the 'living dead' in exile, officials were at times unable to, and at others, for practical reasons, unwilling to completely preclude their social interactions. On the one hand, those judicially exiled were criminals cast out of the center and compelled to reside in a marginal region. Yet, on the other hand, after 1822, Russian law permitted, and even went so far as to compel exiles to rejoin society at least to a certain extent. In 1822, simultaneously with Speranskii's efforts to reform and rationalize Siberian administration, officials introduced new exile and convoy regulations. Eternal exile at hard labor was replaced with 20-year labor sentences followed by permanent resettlement in remote portions of Siberia.[20] The crown further reduced the sentences for exiles who did not commit additional crimes to 10 to 15 years in 1837.[21] Once they completed their labor terms, exiles were enrolled in the status (*sostoianie*) of state peasantry and were provided with parcels of land to homestead. In order to ensure the fiscal stability of these individuals, officials exempted them from the capitation for three years; this concession was extended to six years in 1837.[22] Finally, officials not only permitted exiles to remain married, but actively encouraged exiles to set up regular family lives. The 1822 Regulations on Exiles granted women the right to follow their husbands into exile, and even opted not to separate them from their criminal spouses during transportation. Women who chose this lot in life were not subjected to the same supervision as their convict husbands.[23] Moreover, while regulations forbade female exiles from marrying men who belonged to status groups other than their own, they did not regulate male exiles' marriage practices: authorities encouraged male convicts to marry the daughters of Siberian 'old-timers' (*starozhily*).[24] The state granted these concessions not out of fundamental mercy for exiles, but to prevent exiles from escaping confinement.[25] Officials considered that marriage would preclude disorder and promote social and fiscal stability in Siberia.

These policies reveal a distinct tension in authorities' conception of exiles. While they considered exiles criminal outlaws whom they could not rehabilitate, they also deemed them essential to the colonial project. Officials needed to exploit Siberia's resources. Administrators found it difficult to attract settlers from the interior who voluntarily took it upon themselves to relocate to the distant outposts of Siberia.[26] The region's land was far from fertile, and the climate, lack of educational and medical facilities, and the prospect of life among convicts, sectarians, and aboriginal tribes contributed to the region's negative reputation. Officials thus had little recourse but to involve exiles in their attempts to lend order to this marginal realm. In so doing, they ended up further confusing the meaning of exile and conferring greater liminality upon the exiles themselves at the same time as they strove to clarify exile status. This situation was rendered more acute by the fact that Russian colonialism in Siberia did not proceed according to any master plan but instead was characterized by piecemeal and incomplete 'interventions' on the part of the state because the state itself was in the process of developing politically, socially, and culturally.[27] These factors informed officials' promulgation of penal legislation that mitigated the confusion of boundaries and status and that attempted to fix the position of exiles.

Officials' confusion about how to imagine Siberia was compounded by the fact that the literal and figurative borders between Russia and Siberia proved permeable: the autocracy banished criminals and other misfits to a territory contiguous to the center that was not separated from Russia by impermeable natural boundaries. Because of these tensions, and because it grew increasingly difficult to discern who was a law-abiding subject and who was a criminal because of the fragmentation of the Muscovite and early Imperial penal complex, Nicholaevan officials were especially interested in deploying punishment practices in Siberia that reinforced boundaries. The balance of this essay explores the policies devised by officials to address these problems and suggests why these fell short of their mark.

Branding and *brodiazhestvo*: escape from exile and confused identities

Flight from exile was chronic in nineteenth-century Russia. It is impossible to determine precisely how many convicts fled exile; in the late nineteenth century, the state calculated that approximately 10 per cent of the total exile population had, at one time or another, escaped incarceration or resettlement. Wood considers this a serious underestimation, asserting that the rate of flight varied from 10 to 90 per cent.[28] Between 1847 and 1857, over 3000 *katorzhniki*, or 24 per cent of the total population, fled Nerchinsk alone. Exiles escaped from every Siberian prison, mine, factory, and settlement.[29] Over the century, they fled in the tens of thousands.[30]

Given the serious privations of exile life, it is no mystery that many exiles sought to escape. What form did flight take and why was it so easily accomplished? Maksimov addressed both issues in his voluminous 1874 work, *Sibir' i katorga*. Exiles frequently banded together, sometimes in large numbers, and devised elaborate plans. Often, they bribed officials, many of whom were corrupt or so underpaid that they were bought off easily by vodka or money. In other cases, exiles relied on their guards' stupidity or the fact that camps were poorly patrolled. Sometimes convicts resorted to violence, murdering or maiming prison officials.[31]

It was most common for exiles to take flight in early spring. It was this that earned them the nickname 'General Cuckoo's Army' – they followed the call of the cuckoo bird as they made their way across Siberia. The warmer spring weather, navigable waterways, and brush growth that provided cover and food made this an auspicious time for flight. That agricultural labor was in greater demand in the spring and summer gave fugitive exiles an increased opportunity to earn money.[32]

Maksimov divided fugitives into two camps: permanent and seasonal. The former fled to China or the Russian center. Seasonal fugitives were more interested in having a good time and experiencing a little freedom. Most went no further than the Lake Baikal region, and with the first sign of autumn frost, surrendered themselves to the nearest court, generally disguising their true identities in the hope of receiving a reduced sentence. The following spring, they once more took flight.[33] Authorities never apprehended half of those who fled and most who were not caught turned themselves in.[34]

During the early nineteenth century, local and central authorities were preoccupied with the material and psychological ramifications presented by exile flight, were troubled by the fact that they could not impede escape, and sought to introduce more effective security measures. While at large, vagrants perpetrated offenses, instilling terror in local populations. In 1817, the Perm Procurator reported that over three hundred exiles had fled while being transported from Tobol'sk to the mines; the local court had convicted 80 of them for committing crimes, most of which were 'serious in nature'. The procurator added that these figures were conservative because the Cossacks responsible for transporting the exiles failed to disclose that their charges had run off.[35] In one 1845 case, Governor General Rupert of Eastern Siberia reported that four fugitive *katorzhniki* led by the anonymous vagrant 'Ivan Ivanovich Nepomniashchii' had murdered 11 gold miners along the Gorovka River.[36] Fugitives stole food and livestock and murdered local inhabitants. Such criminal activity not only affected Siberia, but also contiguous Russian provinces, like Perm, Orenburg, Kazan and Simbirsk.[37]

Even more important, officials perceived escape attempts as a violation of the boundaries that the exile system ostensibly erected. Exile was based on the premise that criminals were psychologically and geographically alienated from the civilized world. Fugitives evaded restraint on their physical confinement and, in so doing, denied not only the Russian state's capacity to punish but also to categorize them. The manner in which exiles fled especially affronted authorities: fugitives frequently concealed their identities, adopting pseudonyms, carrying false passports, and donning disguises. For money or vodka, counterfeiters supplied the soon-to-be fugitive with such proficiently stamped and signed documents that only a careful guard could detect the forgery.[38] The fetters worn by convicts failed to deter escape. Rather, 'they could never have prevented any man from running away. The most inept and clumsy convict knew how to saw through them or knock their rivets out with a stone.'[39]

Exiles also concealed their facial brands and the scars left by the knout or lash. In one case, a fugitive masqueraded as a holy fool. He concealed his brands with long hair that covered his face, prevented residents from detecting knout scars on his back by never removing his shirt and, by refusing to bathe, ensured that no one approached him. The townspeople supported him without suspecting his real identity.[40] In another case, a fugitive pretended to be a Turkish hussar, donning a head covering that masked his brands. Inhabitants of Tobol'sk, Tara and Tomsk wined and dined him; only in Krasnoiarsk did they disclose his real status.[41]

Once apprehended, or after they turned themselves in, runaways continued to mock and infuriate officials. Captured fugitives frequently feigned amnesia; many adopted the pseudonym 'Ivan Nepomniashchii' – John I-Don't-Remember – to signify that they could not recollect their name, birthplace, or reason for exile.[42] In 1817, obviously consternated, the Perm Procurator complained that, of the 300 criminals apprehended by rural police, 'many . . . aged forty or fifty claimed that they did not remember their parentage [*ne pomniaiushimi rodstva*]'. Even those who acknowledged that they were soldiers or belonged to a particular landowner were frequently found to be lying.[43] He asserted that

> from this it can be concluded with certainty that they were criminals seeking to hide their real status [*nastoishchiia svoi sostoianiia*]. Moreover, once sent into military service or enserfed, many of them . . . flee once more, and when they are apprehended, in spite of circumstantial evidence to the contrary, they once more pronounce that they do not remember their parentage.[44]

Officials in the center and Siberia repeatedly complained about these no-name vagrants.[45] Authorities' preoccupation with this issue mounted in the early nineteenth century and reached a crescendo following the introduction of the 1845 Codex of Punishments. Until the late eighteenth century, authorities regularly checked the backs of fugitives whom they suspected of being escaped *katorzhniki*. If they were scarred with marks characteristic of the knout, authorities' suspicions were confirmed. However, after 1785, this visual inspection no longer provided fail-safe results: noble and other elite criminals were now exempt from the knout. In 1845, when the knout was abolished, the situation became even more problematic. Authorities administered lashings to both serious and less serious lower-estate criminals. Siberian officials complained regularly about the difficulties posed by the new code and even advocated treating any apprehended fugitive whose back bore lash scars as an escaped exile condemned to eternal hard labor. Although the Second Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancery appreciated the frustration of these officials, it found this practice inadmissible and unjust.[46]

That exiles confused boundaries and concealed their identities prompted officials to introduce various prophylactic and penal technologies. This process got under way during the late 1820s, at precisely that moment when the state overhauled Siberia's administration. Officials envisioned the need for better laws and began to codify and clarify penal legislation for the center; this process carried over to their consideration of the Siberian colony.

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century legislation concerning fugitive exiles was vague. Statute 82 of the regulations governing the oversight of prisoners and exiles merely stated that 'all defendants . . . should be supervised carefully by authorities in order to prevent their flight'.[47] Exiles who attempted escape were lashed and sentenced to additional hard labor in shackles. However, the sentences imposed were comparatively light: first attempts at flight brought no more than 12 lashes; second attempts, no more than 16; and third, no more than 24. This punishment was performed by the police in private rather than publicly by an executioner.[48] In an age when sentences of up to 300 lashes were the rule, 12 to 24 lashes appeared to be a mockery rather than a serious chastisement. Additionally, an 1807 *ukaz* called for enserfing or drafting of all vagrants – including those apprehended in Siberia and its bordering Russian provinces – who falsely attested to their identity. Officials decried this measure because it facilitated fugitives' attempts to avoid responsibility for their crimes.[49] Given officials' preoccupation with vagrancy, it is apparent that these regulations hardly impeded flight.

By the late 1820s, officials' concern with the fugitive problem mounted. Officials organized a fact-finding mission in 1828 headed by the Russian Chief of Staff, General Adjutant Colonel Prianishnikov. Prianishnikov toured Viatka, Perm and Orenburg – all provinces contiguous to Siberia – and reported that local officials repeatedly complained that large numbers of exiles escaped into Russia annually. These fugitives included both *katorzhniki*, whose faces bore brand marks, and *poselentsy*, who had not been branded. This cost the crown over a hundred million rubles a year. But security issues took pre-eminence over fiscal concerns; not only did escaped exiles intimidate local residents but they also threatened to cross over into Russia.[50] Prianishnikov proposed that the police brand the arms of apprehended fugitives to facilitate their arrest in the likely event of a subsequent escape. This branding would be extrajudicial, that is, a police measure that would supplement floggings administered by courts or police and be carried out by a physician's assistant rather than an executioner.[51]

Minister of Justice Dashkov, while apparently sympathetic to local frustrations, countered that

> this suggestion [is] untenable, first, because branding is used only on those who commit 'important crimes' punishable by civil death, [a category] to which vagrancy does not belong, and second, [after the completion of their sentences, exiles are permitted] to return to their former homes, and it would not be fitting for those who are branded to live in the society of honest people . . .[52]

Dashkov deemed the act of branding to constitute and symbolize permanent alienation from society. He denied that an intrinsic difference existed between branding performed by an executioner and that carried out by medical personnel, considering both to be equally shameful. Moreover, he found it inadmissible to treat branding as a police measure, arguing that branding constituted punishment, and as such, required judicial sanction.

The Committee of Ministers disagreed, arguing that the ceremony and the brand's placement and visibility, not the mark itself, made it shameful:

> The branding of vagrants suggested is completely different from the branding of those sentenced to civil death. . . . The latter is placed on the face and constitutes a mark of public dishonor for the criminal; in contrast, the brand recommended for use on fugitives is to be placed on the hand, above the wrist, in a

> *hidden* place and thus does not subject the branded to any sort of *manifest* shame; rather, it is a measure designed to prevent escape, which is permitted . . . by other European countries. [emphasis added][53]

Eastern Siberian administrators supported Prianishnikov's recommendations because they found the measures already in place ineffective.[54] However, the State Council ruled that the Minister of Justice was, in fact, correct, maintaining that *all* branding was by its very nature shameful. Although branding fugitives might ensure greater security, 'such a measure may not be tolerated [when imposed] on a person who may still await a return into society', as this would constitute 'an insult for all estates'.[55]

This, however, was the first and not the final chapter in the story of branding fugitives. During the 1830s, officials continued to complain to the Siberian governors general about the fugitive problem, asserting that traditional penal measures did not 'prevent such inveterate criminals from attempting future escapes and from committing heinous crimes at the very first opportunity that presents itself after they have escaped'. Although the crown instituted harsher lashings for fugitives in 1831, this measure also failed to prevent flight.[56] By 1840, the sheer volume of complaints about fugitives prompted the center to take action.[57] In July, the Tsar introduced branding as a police measure to stem flight. The State Council ruled that,

> [T]he proclivity towards vagrancy and vice, laziness and parasitism, and the desire to evade supervision incessantly lure exiles from their place of settlement or work, and the only means of ending this dangerous form of disorder consists of branding exiles . . . for every instance of flight. . . .[58]

The State Council left it up to the governors general of Siberia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to determine the precise mechanisms, technologies, and scope of this branding.

Recommendations issued by the governors general demonstrate their preoccupation with issues of identity and geographical location. Both governors devised elaborate schemes by which a police official could determine a vagrant's proper location, no matter how obstinate the fugitive was about disclosing his true identity.[59] Both were overwhelmingly concerned that it be possible to 'accurately determine the [exile's] name and the place whence he escaped'. Moreover, they found it imperative to introduce new branding techniques which marked the vagrant in a manner that proved more standardized and lasting than those currently used. Yet, demonstrating their own lack of confidence in the ability of this measure to actually put an end to vagrancy, both realistically suggested that a new brand be affixed for each repeated escape attempt.[60]

Minister of Internal Affairs Perovskii rejected these schemes as cumbersome and unworkable. Since so many fugitives claimed amnesia, issuing specific brands would waste the crown's time and money. Instead, he suggested that exiles at resettlement who fled incarceration be branded with the letters 'SB' to indicate *'ssylno-brodiaga'* and exiles at hard labor with 'SK' to signify *'ssylno-katorzhnik'*. He asserted that it was not nearly as important to know the place of incarceration as it was to be secure about the *status* of the individual.[61] As I demonstrate below, Perovskii's emphasis on status is critical.

Thus, Perovskii, citing an 1842 English edict concerning the branding of army deserters, advocated the introduction of a branding system relatively more mechanized and advanced than that in use. Instead of employing letters cut in varying sizes with a knife, he ordered a St Petersburg foundry to issue standardized bronze plates. These had attached to them blades for incisions. A needle was inserted into the skin of the vagrant's shoulder blade. A doctor applied a tourniquet made of springs that held the skin taut and stemmed the blood flow. He then placed the heated brand onto the marked spot, pressing firmly so that a deep, clean cut was made. A mixture of India ink and indigo was inserted into the fresh brand. In this manner, the tattoo was properly pigmented so as to be made 'virtually indelible'.[62] This branding was private rather than public and always performed by a physician's assistant or police official in the presence of the district attorney and doctor. Ratifying the suggestion of the Siberian governors general, Perovskii agreed that fugitives be branded anew for each attempted flight.[63] This legislation was codified in statutes 1789–91 of the Regulations on Exiles.[64]

Minister of Justice Panin, the Legislative Department of the State Council, the Senate, and Nicholas I accepted Perovskii's suggestions without reservation. By the 1840s, officials were neither concerned that branding would mark these exiles in a shameful way that precluded their reacceptance by society, nor were they concerned that branding, which had formerly been a severe judicial penalty, was employed as a police measure. Exiles' status as outsiders rendered invalid these concerns.

However, there is an interesting twist to the introduction of branding policies. In the midst of discussing the branding of fugitive exiles, Perovskii altered the parameters of these deliberations in a substantive manner. Based on statistics gleaned from provincial studies and views expressed by local officials, the Minister of Internal Affairs maintained that not only exiles, but any vagrant apprehended *within Russia* be branded administratively. Perovskii asserted that vagrancy was a problem that affected the center as well as the periphery.[65] Authorities were relatively unsuccessful in apprehending those who took flight from jails, arrest gangs, the army, and serfdom: between 1840 and 1842 alone, in Moscow, 3642 escaped and only 464 were captured; in Kazan, 1610 took flight and 261 were apprehended; in Perm, 2199 ran away and 974 were caught; and in Tambov 947 fled and only 311 were found by local police.[66] Over a third of those who fled in the internal Russian provinces lied about their identities or hid their names and status. Some vagrants escaped as many as ten times; each time they were treated in exactly the same manner.[67] That those who claimed not to know their status, birthplace, and crime were not punished harshly provided incentive to others to make similar assertions. Perovskii argued that the 'decisive police measure' of branding all amnesiac vagrants be instituted to curtail this evil.[68]

Minister of Justice Panin – not someone noted for his liberal views – disagreed. He considered this measure illegal in spirit. While he concurred with Perovskii that branding amnesiac vagrants might deter flight, he maintained that it was impossible to brand those subject to general Russian criminal law.[69] Those who fled within Russia had not been deprived of privileges attendant to their status. According to Russian law, branding was one of the 'most serious forms of punishment and general opinion concerning branding maintains that it inspires loathing in those who are so marked and visits upon them shame'.[70] Repeating the objections lodged in 1828 by his predecessor, Panin stated that this form of punishment could only be employed against a criminal who had perpetrated an offense punishable by the loss of privileges. Vagrancy did not constitute such a crime.[71]

The Legislative Department of the State Council agreed with Panin. Moreover, it objected to the institution of the police measure of branding vagrants within Russia on two additional grounds. First, it maintained that, if the true identity and status of vagrants were disclosed at some later date, the fact that the vagrant was branded could constitute a miscarriage of justice. Second, this form of branding deprived the vagrant of the right to defend himself since it constituted a police measure rather than a form of punishment that resulted from judicial sentencing. For these reasons, the Legislative Department suggested that, rather than brand vagrants whose identity was in question, police forces and supervision should be bolstered.[72]

Predictably, Perovskii took issue with Panin's conclusions. Like Prianishnikov in 1828, he distinguished between branding serious criminals stripped of their civic identity and marking amnesiac vagrants. For him, the facial brand constituted 'a stamp of the hardened and serious criminal, being visible to all, whereas the branding of vagrants [was] merely an instrument that could ensure the safeguarding of society and would allow them [the vagrants] to carry on a normal way of life'.[73] Furthermore, he felt that, since police had the power to lash, they should also have the right to brand.[74]

The matter was then put before the entire State Council. Eight members agreed with Perovskii. Disregarding legal precedents, they maintained that concealed brands were not especially shameful. Moreover, they cited similar practices in England and elsewhere, arguing that if enlightened states did not deem branding particularly dishonorable, neither should Russia.[75]

Twelve State Council members, including Panin and Second Section head Bludov, disagreed with Perovskii. They underscored the legal ramifications of this issue, maintaining that officials did not have the right to disregard the law out of convenience. Moreover, they suggested that branding vagrants might prove counterproductive. By marking the vagrant with perpetual shame, the brand would obliterate 'the remnants of moral sentiments that impede him from committing further offenses. This will place him firmly on a path of crime. And thus... branding itself could actually lead to an increase in the number of crimes [committed in Russia] and not serve as a deterrent to them.'[76]

Thus the majority of the State Council believed it improper from legal, moral and practical standpoints to institute this measure. Nonetheless, Nicholas I opted for the police view over the judicial. He ratified Perovskii's opinion in March 1846, establishing the practice of branding vagrants within the confines of Russia, as well as those escaping exile.[77]

The practice of branding fugitive exiles and vagrants reveals officials' concern that there were people in Siberia and Russia who refused to occupy a fixed status. When officials stripped criminals of their privileges and status as peasants, merchants, nobles, and so on, they reassigned them to the status (*sostoianie*) of exile. This status was of dubious honor, but its position was still legally fixed and clear. Flight, however, represented a rejection of status altogether. This rejection threatened state order precisely because this order was predicated on the fact that every individual occupied a clear status position. Fugitives belonged to no one and flaunted this to the authorities responsible for determining their place in society. It is unsurprising that the chief proponents of branding were the Minister of Internal Affairs and the governors and police whom he supervised. They were the ones who most often fielded problems caused by fugitives. Branding anonymous Russian vagrants and escaped Siberian convicts constituted the ministry's effort to fix their place within Russian society.

The timing of the introduction of measures for branding fugitive exiles and vagrants is not coincidental. Rather, it precisely corresponded with the promulgation of the 1845 Codex of Punishments. As I asserted above, this code represented officials' attempts to utilize penal legislation to refashion the Russian social structure and render punishment coherent and appropriate to new sociopolitical climates.[78] Moreover, officials were distancing themselves from certain particularly harsh penal practices, most notably the knout.[79] Nonetheless, at the same time as officials retreated from the notion that spectacular forms of punishment that visibly marked the bodies of criminals were the most appropriate means of reinforcing social order, they were unwilling to abandon altogether the idea of visual signifiers. Rather, by introducing the practice of extrajudicial branding, officials literally displaced their need to mark the status of their subjects onto the bodies of those who purposefully confounded categorization.

In 1846, immediately after these laws took effect, police branded 939 fugitive exiles and vagrants; in 1847, this number rocketed to 3553.[80] While officials may have been less troubled by the fact that branding did not appear to stem the tide of vagrancy in the short term, it is clear that its impact was hardly palpable well into the next decade. From 1854–5, 13 per cent of the 1832 individuals arrested claimed not to recall their names and origins. Obviously, branding failed to prevent escape or dissuade fugitives from feigning amnesia and concealing their identity and status.[81]

Equally important, officials recognized that branding proved inadequate for permanently marking those who resisted fixed status. Both officials and exiles employed techniques to 'remove' or make brands less distinct.[82] Authorities were familiar with using lye to obscure brands. In one case, an executioner mistakenly branded a peasant sentenced to public lashing and Siberian resettlement. The peasant appealed and the Western Siberian Governor General ordered authorities to rub out the brand. Yet, local officials expressed concern that other exiles might get ideas about wiping out their own brands. Authorities consequently determined that this operation should be 'completely un-public'.[83] Thus, officials wished to maintain a monopoly on technologies used to obliterate brands by maintaining a high level of secrecy. Yet this was impossible and they repeatedly complained that convicts 'spoiled' and removed their brands, and they appealed for the right to renew brands that were no longer visible.[84]

It is unsurprising that these policies failed to have the desired impact. More significant than the success rate is the light that these measures shed on the anxieties manifested by Russia's servitors. Officials introduced branding practices at the very moment the penal complex itself was fracturing and the geographical and social lines between Russia and Siberia and between upstanding citizen and banished exile were becoming exceedingly blurred. For officials, fugitive exiles and vagrants embodied disorder and instability. Officials focused on fixing the status of exiles and vagrants who flouted the state's effort to categorize its subjects, by branding them with the mark of Cain. That the branded continued to frustrate officials speaks to the futility of endeavors to establish status and identity in an increasingly unstable context.

Notes

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Pennsylvania Women's Studies Program, and the Faculty Research Fund of Franklin & Marshall College. My colleagues who participated in the Workshop on Imperial Russian and Soviet History provided me with provocative and thoughtful comments. I especially thank Yanni Kotsonis, Peter Holquist, and Elizabeth Wood for their suggestions.

1 Edward V. Williams, *The Bells of Russia: History and Technology* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 47–50. I am grateful to Caryl Emerson and Gabriella Safran for this reference.
2 Before 1818, this included the slitting of nostrils.
3 S. V. Maksimov, *Sibir' i katorga*, Izd. 3-ee (St Petersburg, 1900), p. 5.
4 Ibid., p. 14.
5 Alan D. Wood, 'Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead', in Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson, eds, *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), p. 218.
6 Fedor Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, tr. David McDuff (London, 1985), p. 219.
7 The Senate formulated these regulations when it abolished the death penalty in 1754. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, (PSZ), No. 10306, First Series (St Petersburg, 1832).
8 Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven, 1983); PSZ, No. 16187, First Series; David Griffith, 'Of Estates, Charters, and Constitutions', in David Griffiths and George E. Munro, tr. and eds, *Catherine II's Charters of 1785 to the Nobility and the Towns, The Laws of Russia. Series II: Imperial Russia, Volume 289: April 21, 1785* (Bakersfield, 1991), pp. xiv–lxvi; V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Istoriia soslovii v Rossii (kurs, chitannyi v Moskovskom universitete v 1886-om godu)*, Izd. 2-oe (Moscow, 1914), pp. 2–11; and Abby M. Schrader, 'Containing the Spectacle of Punishment: the Russian Autocracy and the Abolition of the Knout, 1817–1845', *Slavic Review*, v. 56, no. 4 (1997), pp. 613–44.
9 *Proekt ulozheniia o nakazaniiakh ugolovnykh i ispravitel'nykh: vnesennyi v 1844 godu v Gosudarstvennyi Sovet* (St Petersburg, 1845). This thesis is developed in the first two chapters of Schrader, 'The Languages of the Lash: the Russian Autocracy and the Reform of Corporal Punishment, 1817–1893' (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996) and Schrader, 'Containing the Spectacle of Punishment'.
10 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 9–10.
11 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA), f. 1265, op. 1, 1852–9, d. 167, ll. 26ob–27.
12 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 7–10.
13 N. M. Korkunov, *Russkoe gosudarstvennoe pravo, Tom 1, Obshchaia Chast'*, 8-oe izdanie (St Petersburg, 1914), pp. 188–9. Bludov commented that Russia constituted a unified state by the fifteenth century. *Proekt ulozheniia o nakazaniiakh ugolovnykh i ispravitel'nykh: vnesennyi v 1844 godu v Gosudarstvennyi Sovet*, p. v.
14 RGIA f. 1265, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 42ob–43.
15 Wood, 'Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead', pp. 217–21.

16 Ibid., p. 220; Alan D. Wood, 'Russia's "Wild East": Exile, Vagrancy and Crime in Nineteenth-Century Siberia', in Wood ed., *The History of Siberia from Russian Conquest to Revolution* (London, 1991), p. 118.
17 Maksimov does not provide a breakdown of those exiled at resettlement. From 1760 landlords were permitted to forcibly exile peasants who were disruptive. This group far outnumbered judicial exiles in the nineteenth century. Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, p. 317; PSZ No. 11166, First Series; Wood, 'Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead', p. 221.
18 In 1852, 961 310 Russian men lived in Siberia. RGIA f. 1265, op. 1, 1852–9, d. 167, l. 26ob.
19 Wood, 'Russia's "Wild East"', p. 128.
20 Wood, 'Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead', pp. 222–3.
21 On Bludov's recommendation, Grand Prince Aleksander Nikolaevich issued an *ukaz* to this effect on 29 June 1837. Rossiiskoi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnykh Aktov (RGADA), f. 1274, op. 1, 1837, d. 566, ll. 1–6ob, 35–6ob.
22 Ibid., ll. 4–4ob, 35ob.
23 Statutes 249–50, *Svod uchrezhdenii i ustavov o ssyl'nykh, Tom 14, Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (St Petersburg, 1832). PSZ No. 29128, ss. 221, 222, 225, First Series.
24 Statute 397, *Svod uchrezhdenii i ustavov o ssyl'nykh, Tom 14, Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (St Petersburg, 1832). PSZ No. 29128, s. 229, First Series.
25 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1840, d. 53, ll. 33–4ob, 134ob–135, 455–6.
26 RGIA f. 1265, op. 1, 1852–9, d. 167.
27 Wood, *The History of Siberia from Russian Conquest to Revolution*, pp. 3–5.
28 Wood, 'Russia's "Wild East"', p. 123.
29 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 61, 65.
30 Wood, 'Russia's "Wild East"', p. 123.
31 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 59–61.
32 Ibid., pp. 66–70; Wood, 'Russia's "Wild East"', p. 121; Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, p. 272.
33 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 65–6, 70–4; Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, p. 273.
34 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, p. 187.
35 RGIA f. 1286, op. 2, 1817, d. 245, ll. 2ob–3.
36 RGIA f. 1286, op. 9, 1845–6, d. 493, ll. 6–9ob.
37 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, pp. 78, 187, 214.
38 Ibid., pp. 81–2; Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, p. 342.
39 Ibid., p. 220.
40 Maksimov, *Sibir'i Katorga*, p. 86.
41 Ibid.
42 Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, pp. 254–5.
43 RGIA f. 1286, op. 2, 1817, d. 245, ll. 2–2ob.
44 RGIA f. 1286, op. 2, 1817, d. 245, l. 2ob.
45 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1844, d. 78, ll. 31, 33; RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 3–3ob, 15–18, 38–9, 42–5; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, d. 49, ll. 162–222; RGIA f. 1261, op. 2, 1852, d. 119a, l. 2; RGIA f. 1149, t. 4, 1854, d. 54, ll. 2–3.
46 RGIA f. 1149, t. 4, 1855, d. 24, ll. 345, 359–63.

47 Statute 82, *Uchrezhdenie i ustav o soderzhanii pod strazheiu*, v. 14, Svod Zakonov; PSZ No. 10650, No. 17179, No. 20335, First Series.

48 Statutes 802–4, *Ustav o ssylnykh*, v. 14, Svod Zakonov; PSZ No. 18978, No. 21224, First Series; PSZ No. 3356, No. 4314, No. 4515, Second Series.

49 RGIA f. 1286, op. 2, 1817, d. 245, l. 2.

50 In Perm, 357 000 had escaped in 1825; 550 000 in 1826; and 591 000 in 1827. Over the course of a single two-week period, 2000 exiles had escaped from Tom'sk, Enisensk and Irkutsk into Russia. RGIA f. 1149, t. 2, 1828, d. 66, ll. 3, 7.

51 RGIA f. 1149, t. 2, 1828, d. 66, ll. 3–3ob.

52 Ibid., l. 4ob.

53 Ibid., ll. 5–5ob.

54 Ibid., ll. 7–8.

55 Ibid., ll. 10ob–11.

56 RGIA f. 1261, op. 1, 1831, d. 438, ll. 1–3.

57 Beginning in 1837, the Governor General of Eastern Siberia advocated branding 'no-name' fugitives in his region. RGIA f. 1149, t. 4, 1855, d. 24, l. 345; RGIA f. 1261, op. 1, 1840, d. 52, ll. 10–11.

58 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 2–3; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 15–56.

59 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 3ob–8; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, l. 160.

60 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 3ob–4, 5–6, 8.

61 Ibid., ll. 26–8.

62 Ibid., ll. 23–23ob.

63 Ibid., ll. 26–8.

64 Statute 1789, *Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii: Ustav o ssyl'nykh* (St Petersburg, 1842); RGIA, f. 1286, op. 16, 1855, d. 574, ll. 1–3.

65 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 11, 31–2; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 162ob–163, 181ob.

66 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, l. 20; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 170–2.

67 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 18–19; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 203–4.

68 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 31–2, 34.

69 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 13ob–14; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, l. 164.

70 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, l. 38.

71 Ibid., ll. 13–14ob, 38.

72 Ibid., ll. 38–38ob, 187.

73 Ibid., l. 39ob.

74 RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, ll. 51–6; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 214–15, 220.

75 RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, ll. 210–13.

76 RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, l. 187.

77 This *ukaz* was circulated to provincial governors in June 1846. RGIA f. 1149, t. 3, 1845, d. 49, l. 56; RGIA f. 1160, op. 1, 1845, d. 75, l. 220; RGIA f. 1286, op. 16, 1855, d. 574, ll. 1–3.

78 From the 1830s to the early 1850s, officials extended exemption from

corporal punishment to honorary citizens, rural officials, Caucasian women, and individuals enrolled in various educational institutions. Schrader, 'The Languages of the Lash'.

79 The significance of the knout's abolition in Schrader, 'Containing the Spectacle of Punishment'.

80 Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 282–3.

81 RGIA f. 1286, op. 16, 1855, d. 574, ll. 5–122.

82 RGIA f. 1149, t. 4, 1855, d. 24, l. 286; Dostoevsky, *The House of the Dead*, p. 94.

83 RGIA f. 1261, op. 2, 1859, d. 158, ll. 1–3.

84 Exiles who committed additional serious crimes were rebranded if the original brand was illegible. However, regulations did not specify whether authorities could rebrand an exile if his original brand faded. RGIA f. 1261, op. 2, 1859, d. 139, ll. 1–5; RGIA, f. 1149, t. 4, 1855, d. 24, l. 286.

3

Ethnicity, Nationality and the Masses: *Narodnost'* and Modernity in Imperial Russia

Nathaniel Knight

> *Narodnost'* is the alpha and the omega of the new era.[1]
>
> V. Belinskii, 1834

Russia, at first glance, would seem a dubious candidate to wear the emblem of modernity. Few features are as universally ascribed to Russia's historical experience from earliest times to the present day as backwardness. In Russia's gallery of backwardness nationality is on prominent display. Put to the test in the early twentieth century, when European nationalist fervor was at its peak, Russian national cohesion proved a feeble force in the face of war, revolution and the deep-seated divisions of class and ethnicity. What were the sources of Russia's weak national cohesion? Was Russia's fragile sense of nationhood a mark of backwardness or modernity gone wrong? This essay is an attempt to shed light on these issues by exploring the development of a linguistic and conceptual apparatus for the expression of nationality in the period up until the mid-nineteenth century.

The connection between nationality and modernity has become a commonplace in recent literature.[2] But modernity can be understood in various ways. One common trend has been to define modernity in connection with specific events and processes – industrialization, urbanization, the French Revolution – or in terms of socioeconomic transformations – feudalism to capitalism, *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, organic to mechanical solidarity, and so on. But modernity can also be understood as a mode of historical consciousness, a manner of situating oneself in time. Modernity, in this sense, manifests itself as an awareness of the disjuncture between present and past and the impermanence of present-day reality as history moves along a clearly discernible path of development. Put more simply, modernity is a consciousness of the normality of change. The essential question in this case is not so much when modernity 'happens', but rather what is the particular nature of modernity at any given moment.

Viewed from this perspective, the idea of the nation takes on a fundamental significance. If history, viewed from the perspective of modernity, is process and narrative, then the process must have a subject, the narrative, a protagonist. History, in its modern rendition is, if nothing else, the story of nations. The nation is the protagonist of modernity.

But before the nation can play its role in the theater of modernity it must be defined as a concept. Complexities arise, however, in tracing this process. The modern concept of nationality may have been a historical innovation of the late eighteenth century, as many historians have argued, but the language used to express it was not. Nationality was grafted onto a pre-existing vocabulary expressing a variety of concepts, many of which continued to be relevant even after nationality took hold. Moreover, these pre-existing meanings gave a particular flavor to the idea of nationality as it was adopted into various languages. The result is not a single term expressing only the idea of nationality, but rather a constellation of meanings, often closely related, but nonetheless distinct, of which nationality is but a single component. In comparing different linguistic practices we find that these constellations may overlap, but they almost never coincide. Thus, terms expressing the idea of nationality, even when borrowed directly from one language to another, are often very difficult to translate.

The task of this essay is to explore one such constellation of meanings – that expressed by the word '*narod*' and its derivative '*narodnost*'. In the word '*narod*' we find interwoven several distinct concepts: humanity, ethnicity, nationality and the popular masses. Our goal is to trace the evolution and mutual interaction of these various meanings and in so doing to shed some light on the specificity of Russian ethnic and national awareness and, hence, on the nature of Russian modernity as it came to be perceived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Narod as ethnicity

Early Slavic sources depict a world populated by various peoples, each with their own unique name, differing in their languages, customs and physical appearance. Ethnicity was a fact of life, understood in the immediate and instinctive manner of 'us' and 'them'. Whether or not an individual was regarded as 'us' or 'them' was a product first and foremost of the ability to communicate freely with others. Ethnic difference was denoted primarily by the word for language (*iazyk, iazytsi*) rather than the word *narod* which implies a more abstract concept of ethnicity.[3]

It is only in the latter half of the seventeenth century that *narod* comes to be used consistently as a designation of ethnicity. Prior to this time Russians, it would seem, showed little interest in ethnicity as a phenomenon. While ethnonyms abound in early sources, terms to denote ethnicity itself seem to have been used fairly infrequently. Non-Russians were referred to either as *inozemtsy* – those of other lands – or by their ethnonyms often in adjectival forms modifying the universal signifier, *liudi*.[4] Distinctions more important than ethnicity are made among *inozemtsy* in Muscovite sources on practical grounds: Where did they live? To whom did they pay tribute (*iasak*)? Were they settled or nomadic, agricultural or trading? Language used to describe *inozemtsy* in the Muscovite period served, above all, to convey the resources at the disposal of a particular population and the ways in which they could be extracted.[5]

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century the term *narod* begins to appear as a designator of ethnicity. In 1675, for example, the traveler Nikolai Milesku-Spafarii wrote a lengthy description of the Ostiak *narod* in which he went far beyond economic utility to describe their eating habits and way of life.[6] The appearance of '*narod*' to denote ethnicity coincided with a steady growth of interest in the ethnic composition of the state. From the reign of Peter the Great and on into the eighteenth century, Russian scholars produced numerous geographical studies, travel notes and ethnographic compendia containing detailed information about the lives and ways of indigenous peoples.[7] In all of this literature, *narod* was used extensively and consistently as the prime signifier of ethnicity.

The use of *narod* as a general ethnic label resembles the pre-Enlightenment Western European usage of 'nation' to refer to non-European peoples.[8] Both *narod* and nation allowed the perception of diversity without implying any specific classification or developmental scheme. Early modern travel writers had little difficulty perceiving distinctions among non-European peoples: their writing abounds with references to 'the infinite variety and number of nations in Africa and America'.[9] By the eighteenth century, however, the Western concept of 'nation' began to shift away from ethnicity. Increasingly, 'nation' came to acquire an exclusively cultural dimension based on qualities often seen to be absent outside Europe. As the biologist Buffon put it: 'any nation where there is neither rule, nor law, nor master, nor regular society is less a nation than a tumultuous assembly of independent barbarians, each obeying only their own particular passions.'[10] With the slave trade and colonial expansion reaching their peak, distinctions among peoples which Western travelers had earlier described in detail, now seemed irrelevant at best. The idea of race provided a new matrix of distinction seemingly grounded in 'nature' which reduced 'national' distinctions among non-Europeans to the level of triviality.[11] To the extent that distinctions of language and custom were still apparent, the word 'tribe' was employed and now came to acquire the connotation of unmistakable inferiority.[12]

Freed from its overt ethnic dimension, the concept of nation developed in two distinct directions, both of which were to find their penultimate expression in the last decades of the eighteenth century: the political nation, as expressed in Rousseau's concept of the 'General Will' and later enshrined as the guiding idea of the French Revolution; and the cultural nation, as envisioned by Herder and developed by his followers into a cornerstone of German Romanticism.

The political nation

Long before *narod* came to denote ethnicity the term was used in Russian to express the idea of collective humanity – crowds, assemblies, groups extending beyond the family situated within a limited physical space. Religious texts, from scripture to saints' lives and chronicles are filled with such references.[13] Popular proverbs attest to the predominance of the usage in colloquial Russian.[14] Naturally the concrete meaning of *narod* as assembled humanity also came to acquire more figurative connotations. The *narod* assembled in one place could easily come to symbolize all the people of the land.[15] Thus, out of a general sense of collectivity came a new and more subtle meaning – *narod* as the totality of inhabitants of the polity: *narod* as the civic nation.

An early example of the public connotations of *narod* can be found in the Councilar Act of 1682 proclaiming the abolition of service precedence (*mestnichestvo*). In their justification of the abolition of *mestnichestvo* the framers of the Councilar Act drew on a novel line of argumentation: by abolishing precedence the Tsar was acting in the public interest – *k obshchemu narodnomu blagu.*[16] The implication is of a *narod* whose needs and wishes transcend the interests of any particular individuals or groups and whose well-being was a paramount goal of state policy.

In the Petrine manifesto, 'The Justice of the Monarch's Will' (*Pravda voli monarshei*), attributed to Feofan Prokopovich, the idea of a public interest is extended to encompass a rudimentary notion of popular sovereignty.[17] Drawing on such Western writers as Puffendorf, Hobbes and Grotius, Prokopovich catalogues existing forms of political organization, positing for Russia a monarchical rule which is derived from the will of the *narod*:

> ... when the people meekly and peacefully and even in good will have become accustomed to obeying their autocrat, it is fitting to conclude that the monarchic house rules by a scepter of power not seized by force, but given by the will of all the people [*vsenarodnoiu voloiu*].[18]

Like Hobbes, however, Prokopovich envisioned the bequest of authority by the nation to the monarch as final and irrevocable. Once enshrined on the throne, the monarch became the living embodiment of the people's will. 'There can be no other way to interpret the will of the people [*narodnaia volia*] than from the very visage and image of the monarch; where the monarch shall be, such is the will of the people ...'[19]

By linking the power of the monarch to the will of all the people, Prokopovich laid the foundation for the argument that the monarch had a responsibility to the *narod* to provide a fitting successor. In the context of Peter's rule this may simply have been a tactical maneuver with little practical significance. The instability stemming from the Petrine law of succession, however, provided ample possibilities for the idea of popular sovereignty to reassert itself. All the female successions of the eighteenth century were justified not only by heredity or appointment but also as the desire of all the people.[20] Practically speaking the *'generalitet'* and elite guards regiments took on the role of the surrogate *'narod'*: without the support of these groups no succession was viable.[21]

But for all its symbolic significance, the concept of popular sovereignty could never be manifested institutionally. As the crisis of 1730 revealed, only by positing supreme power in the person of the monarch could the autocracy be truly national, not beholden to the particular interests of factions or institutions. Any attempt to embody the 'people's will' in sovereign institutions would upset the delicate balance within informal networks of power, thereby evoking near universal dissatisfaction.[22] Thus the idea of popular sovereignty remained a rhetorical stance, an expression of the legitimacy and felicity of the monarch's rule. As would often be the case, *narod* was defined through a binary model – the ruler and the ruled. Throughout the eighteenth century, it was the state that created the nation, the defining characteristics of which, transcending ethnicity and social status, were loyalty and obedience to the monarch.[23]

The cultural nation

Throughout most of the eighteenth century the dominant meanings of *narod* – ethnicity and civic or imperial nationality – remained distinct and almost entirely separate. *Narod* in the imperial sense was both ethnically and socially inclusive. The familiar meaning of *narod* as the *nizy*, the lower ranks of society, was a later development. When eighteenth-century writers wished to refer specifically to the peasantry or the urban poor, the term *narod* was almost always modified – generally by 'prostoi' or 'chernoi'. Alternatively, words such as *prostoliudiny* and *chern'* were used. Even when the peasants and nobility were juxtaposed, as in the case of Novikov's satirical 'Discourse on the Essence of the Simple People', *narod* was generally not used without a modifier.[24]

In the last quarter of the century, however, the ethnic and the national begin to overlap. This process is exemplified by the development of interest in Russian folklore. There was, of course, nothing uniquely Russian about the 'discovery of the folk' in the late eighteenth century. From the Ossian tales to Scandinavian epics and the folklore collections of Herder and the brothers Grimm, Europeans of all nations looked to folklore for insight into history and identity.[25] In turning to folklore, European thinkers, particularly in the wake of Herder's groundbreaking formulations, posited a cultural essence that constituted the defining feature of the nation. '*Narod*' in its ethnic sense, used to designate the alien 'other', now turned in on itself as the question of Russian identity came to occupy an ever greater place in public discourse. Merely being a subject of the Empire, part of a '*rossiiskii narod*' (a concept that itself came more and more to seem like an oxymoron) was no longer enough to define Russianness. It was spirit that mattered and, in the wake of Herder, folklore was seen as its purest manifestation.

Throughout much of the eighteenth century, folk songs, folk tales, proverbs and omens were endemic to the culture of the nobility and even the court. Up through the 1780s folklore was published primarily for purposes of entertainment with little regard paid to scholarly precision and the search for the true wellsprings of Russianness.[26] Only in the 1790s does a new approach become evident.

Folklore came to be of interest during the 1790s in part because of its perceived antiquity. The collection of folk songs, *Russkaia erata*, published in 1792 by Mikhail Popov is indicative of this approach. In his introduction, Popov adamantly denies any aesthetic value in the 'singularly unpleasant screeching' of folk songs. But Popov does acknowledge their historical value: as relics of antiquity dating back to pre-Christian times they reveal the ways and deeds of Russia's forefathers, the ancient Slavs who, 'driven by crude nature alone or by their native talent unrefined by learning, put into words some of the adventures close to their hearts'.[27]

If folklore provided a window to the Russians of ancient times, it could also, some assumed, reveal something about what it meant to be Russian. Radishchev in his *Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow* notes at the outset of his trek: 'Whoever knows the melodies of Russian folk songs [*narodnye pesni*] will agree that there is something in them denoting soulful grief . . . In them you will find the formation of the soul of our people.'[28] Likewise, in the second edition of the L'vov/Prach song collection (1805), folk songs are discussed as a tool for 'philosophy which seeks to draw conclusions from folk-singing about the national character'.[29]

The recognition of the antiquity of folklore, and hence its vital importance as part of the national heritage, and the notion that folk songs could convey essential truths about the national character are evidence of a broader shift – the emergence of the idea of *narod* as the cultural nation. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, the meaning of *narod* was no longer limited to the totality of subjects of the realm. Nor was it simply a convenient label to denote the ethnic other. Ethnicity was no mere by-product of language and habitat; it was a thing in itself, the creator rather than the product of its external manifestations. As such, the concept of an ethnically Russian *narod* could no longer harmoniously co-exist with the imperial conception of *narod* espoused and defined by the ruling dynasty. Once *narod* is defined apart from the autocracy, an actor emerges on the stage of history with an independent destiny and a compelling need to advance. But whose vision of modernity would point the way to Russia's future?

The search for *narodnost'*

Once *narod* had acquired the connotation of an autonomous and integral cultural entity, the question inevitably arose – what are its distinguishing features, its underlying essence that shapes its identity? To address these issues meant moving from the relatively concrete concept of *narod* to the abstract principle of *narodnost'*. In the decades that followed its introduction into the Russian language in 1819, *narodnost'* would become a virtual obsession for an entire generation of Russian intellectuals, a generation that would make seminal contributions to Russian literature, philosophy and art.[30] In part the broad response that the term evoked was a product of its very ambiguity: *narodnost'* was more question than answer, more challenge than resolution. But *narodnost'* provided the means to formulate and express the problem of national identity and in so doing opened the way for an onslaught of diverse conceptions of national being.

As with folklore, Russians, in turning their attention toward the problem of national identity, were following along the well-worn path of European romantic nationalism. But the Russian context imparted a particular urgency to their search for national distinction. Literary debates in the West over 'Classicism' and 'Romanticism' and manifestos of literary nationalism such as Madame de Staël's *On Germany* posed a particular challenge to Russian intellectuals.[31] The widely read essay 'Analyse de l'idée de littérature nationale', written in 1817 by Frederic Ancillon, illustrates well the nature of this challenge.

At the heart of Ancillon's conception of nationality is the idea of individuality. An individual, he argued, is a fully formed, fully determined being, an organic whole that can not be split into smaller units without losing its identity:

> To have individuality, it is enough to form an organic whole, and to have a distinct and particular imprint. When a nation is concerned, this distinct and particular imprint is what is known as the national character.[32]

National character arises when a people exhibits common traits of spirit, will and sensibility which give rise to common ideas, principles, habits, affections and tastes. There is nothing democratic, however, in Ancillon's concept of the nation. On the contrary, it is the cultural elite that, in essence, creates the nation:

> National character manifests itself to a great degree in those elite beings who, by their genius, represent the nation and offer to it its own idealized traits . . . Poets and orators announce, by their choice of subject, by the forms in which they adorn the ideal, by the tone of their compositions, the nature of the sentiments and the ideas which they put into circulation, that they belong to this nation.[33]

The nation, in turn, recognizes itself in these works of art, thereby reinforcing its uniqueness. Put another way, literature is the mirror held to the face of the nation by men of genius which brings awareness of a distinct and inimitable state of being.

The ideas expressed in the works of Ancillon, de Staël and other romantic nationalists raised fundamental questions for young educated Russians about the place of their nation in the modern world. Russia had shown its military prowess in the struggle against Napoleon. In the Igor Tale, Russia had found its epic tradition. Karamzin was busily engaged in crafting his *History of the Russian State*. But these achievements were still not enough to establish Russia's modernity. Russia needed to be not only a modern state, but also a nation that manifested its unique and inimitable character through a national literature, created by men of genius imbued with the spirit of the nation. Romantic nationalism imposed upon Russian writers the task of creating the nation.

Prince P. A. Viazemskii was an outstanding and at the same time typical representative of the post-1812 generation of writers. What is striking about Viazemskii and his contemporaries is the deliberateness with which they sought to create a Russian national literature. The term *narodnost'* was coined by Viazemskii as a means for expressing the qualities to be embodied in this new literature. In

November 1819, Viazemskii wrote to his friend A. I. Turgenev about a poem he had recently completed:

> In my opinion these verses are my own monstrosity. There is a Russian tint there that is lacking in almost all of our verse. You won't recognize a Russian poet by physiognomy... It's not a matter here of worth, but of imprint [*otpechatok*]; not of eloquence, but of a manner of speaking [*vygovor*]; not a matter of elegance of movement, but of the *narodnost'* of certain of our native gestures. Why not translate 'nationalité' as *narodnost'*? The Poles talk about *narodowosć*! The Poles are not as fastidious as we are, and words that don't come running over to them voluntarily, they drag over by the hair, and the matter is settled. It's wonderful! If a word is needed it will take root.[34]

As posterity would show, Viazemskii was quite right about the need for *narodnost'*. But merely introducing the term did little to clarify its content. Viazemskii and his contemporaries understood *narodnost'* as an aesthetic quality that was necessary for Russian literature to flourish. But where was *narodnost'* to be found? What were the elements that would define nationality in literature? Viazemskii himself was not consistent on these issues. Initially he suggested that *narodnost'* lay not so much in the content as in the style, a particular manner of expression that is uniquely and unmistakably Russian. But when his friend, Turgenev, questioned the originality of his style, Viazemskii was compelled to fall back on content:

> I call myself a native Russian poet because I dig for everything in my own soil. For the most part I curse, praise and describe that which is Russian: the Russian winter, Finnish [*chukhonskii*] Petersburg, Christmas in Petersburg and so on and so forth. This is what I sing.[35]

A Russian poet, Viazemskii suggests, is one who writes of Russian things. But if '*chukhonskii Peterburg*' qualifies as the essence of Russianness, then what is Russian is clearly in the eye of the beholder.

Viazemskii's neologism was quickly accepted in Russian literary circles, and within a few years Russian journals were brimming with discussion and polemics over the meaning and sources of *narodnost'*. The critic Orest Somov, in a well-known essay entitled 'On Romantic Poetry', echoed Viazemskii's original formulation that *narodnost'* derived from style rather than content and urged Russian writers not to limit themselves to specifically Russian themes but to explore in their creative endeavors the vastness and diversity of the Empire.[36] Pushkin also considered *narodnost'* a particular quality in a writer's style 'that can only be appreciated by one's countrymen' but that manifested itself regardless of the specific content: Shakespeare was no less English because he set Hamlet in Denmark. At the same time, *narodnost'*, Pushkin believed, was not merely the product of a writer's whim, but rather was the expression of a 'specific [national] physiognomy which is reflected to greater or lesser extent in the mirror of poetry'.[37] Other writers placed more of an emphasis on specific national traditions preserved among the common people. The Decembrist poet Kiukhel'beker wrote in 1824: 'The faith of our forefathers, national mores, chronicles, folk songs and tales – these are the best, the purest and the truest sources for our literature.'[38]

What emerges most strongly from these early discussions of *narodnost'* is a sense of indeterminacy. Romanticism in all its manifestations posited nationality as a fundamental element of creative expression (and vice versa). But nationality requires a nation, and while educated Russians, still basking in the patriotic glow of 1812, would never doubt that they had a nation, it was very difficult to establish what exactly nationhood meant. There was, of course, the imperial dynastic model on which to fall back – the Tsar defines the nation. But for the generation of the Decembrists, exposed to the legacy of the French Revolution, this was a model which could no longer be left unquestioned. As the Decembrist P. G. Kakhovskii put it in a letter to Nicholas I, 'it is a bitter thing for a Russian not to have a nation, and to terminate everything in the sovereign alone.'[39] Another option might have been to build a vision of the nation around the idea of the common people. The growing interest in folklore might suggest at first glance a tendency in this direction. But the study of folklore was motivated above all by historical concerns: the common people were of interest not so much for who they were as for what they had preserved. Still mired in serfdom and ignorance, the common people were of little use as the foundation of the nation in the here and now. In the absence of other modes of defining nationality, thinkers of the Decembrist era were left to discuss the problem in the rarefied sphere of poetry and art.

There was, moreover, a final block to defining nationality even more formidable than those we have just listed: the lack of a conceptual model through which to envision nationhood. As is often pointed out, the young nobles of the 1820s, contemporaries of the Decembrists, were men of action with little patience for the murky intricacies of speculative thought.[40] Philosophical conceptions of nationality appear in early discussions of *narodnost'* as implicit assumptions, present but never fully articulated. But it was precisely in the realm of philosophy that discussions of *narodnost'* would resume after the traumatic shock of the Decembrist revolt.

Narodnost' as philosophy

The idealist philosophy of Friedrich Schelling would seem at first glance an unlikely source on which to base a philosophical vision of nationality. In comparison with his *naturphilosophie* and theory of aesthetics, Schelling's philosophy of history – the area most essential to nationality – was quite underdeveloped.[41] But yet, as A. N. Pypin points out, it was precisely Schelling's transcendental idealism that brought order to the scattered insights and observations put forth in connection with the problem of *narodnost'* by Viazemskii and his contemporaries.[42] As is often the case in cultural borrowing, Russian thinkers seized on the elements of Schellingian idealism which corresponded best to their needs at a particular time and extrapolated it far beyond the original framework expounded by the master.[43]

The nation in itself did not occupy a prominent place in Schelling's philosophical system.[44] Insofar as he addressed the issue of nationhood, Schelling strayed little from the basic formulations of Herder and Fichte. In the tradition of Herder, Russian Schellingians were quick to embrace the concept of nations as organic entities, beings unto themselves, imbued with a unique 'national spirit'. But Schellingian monism put limits on national particularism – a nation's existence could only have meaning in the context of a unified world historical process. In an effort to find this meaning Russian Schellingians posited a national mission, a particular role or task which the nation was to fulfill in the life of the Absolute. As Pogodin put it:

> History must create from all of the human race a single entity, a single individual, and present the biography of this individual through all the stages of growth. The multitude of nations [*narody*]

> which have lived and acted over the course of millennia each contribute to such a biography, perhaps, a single trait. To recognize this trait is the task of great historians.[45]

It was, of course, Chaadaev who took the idea of a national mission to its furthest extreme with his thesis that Russia's mission was to serve as a lesson for the nations of the world. But the notion at the heart of Russian Schellingianism of a national idea unfolding through history provided a powerful and decisive answer to the challenge of modernity that had so befuddled Viazemskii and his contemporaries. Russia's nationhood did not have to be defined. The essence of *narodnost'* no longer had to be sought. The nation was a product neither of the ruler, nor history nor the creative legacy of the common people. The nation, rather, was a philosophical principle, an extension of mind, which existed a priori, and which was endowed with a vital role in the unfolding of the Absolute. K. N. Lebedev, a lesser-known Schellingian, writes:

> All peoples [*narody*] have their own spirit, their own character, and this very spirit of a people I call nationality [*natsional'nost'*]. And so, what is nationality? It is that unchanging principle of life in which is reflected all conditions of life; that birthmark of a people, with which its fate is imprinted; that quality of a nation [*natsiia*] which relates to the qualities of other nations like one concept to another; the concentration of all forces of a people which in our souls we call consciousness. Yes, nationality is the consciousness of the nation, nationality is the idea of nation.[46]

Perhaps the precise nature of the Russian idea was not yet clear, but Schelling provided an explanation for this too. Since all being was fundamentally alike, analogy was a valid and potent epistemological tool. The nation, therefore, could be seen as a being analogous to the individual, and like the individual, it went through a set of distinct and uniform stages of growth. As Polevoi puts it:

> Society [*obshchestvo*] is the depiction of the individual [*chelovek*], for society is, strictly speaking, the individual multiplied upon nature... Nations [*narody*], like people [*liudi*], are born, grow, mature, age and die, i.e. they are, like the individual, children, men and old men... The mysterious wisdom of providence, visible in the fate of nations, consists of the fact that precisely in its

> time and in its place a nation appears to accomplish its task in the common history of humanity.[47]

If Russia's task was not yet fully clear, this could easily be explained by its historical youth – how many children are aware of the destiny that fate has bequeathed in their adult lives? Out of the notion of Russia's youth arose the messianic impulse which would prove to be a pervasive feature of Russian modernity. Merely advancing into a more perfect future was insufficient. Russia's future was also the future of all humanity, the realization of the next and perhaps the culminating phase in the world historical process.

Official nationality

No more eloquent testimony can be found to the centrality of nationality in Russian culture of the 1830s than the phenomenon of so-called 'Official Nationality'. Never before had the autocracy felt obliged to articulate an official ideology. While Official Nationality is often portrayed as a reactionary doctrine intended to stave off even the thought of change, the very fact of its existence betrays a historical awareness indicative of modernity.

Sergei Uvarov, the architect of Official Nationality, came from an intellectual background very close, in many ways, to that of Prince Viazemskii and his contemporaries.[48] The discussions in the early 1820s on *narodnost'* in literature held little that would have been unfamiliar or surprising to him. Uvarov found much less common ground, however, with the vision of nationality that emerged from Schellingian idealism in the late 1820s. In contrast to the Schellingian notion of nationality as an autonomous metaphysical essence, Uvarov's formula of 'Orthodox, Autocracy and Nationality', was grounded in the traditional dynastic vision of nationality.[49] As Prokopovich had argued over a century earlier, the monarch, in Uvarov's view, was the embodiment of the nation, the point of universal reference bringing together the vast and diverse population of the empire into a solid integral mass permeated with the essence of Russianness.[50]

The tension between the philosophical conception of *narodnost'* and official nationality is illustrated with particular poignancy in the fate of Nikolai Nadezhdin. As Professor of Aesthetics at Moscow University in the early 1830s and editor of the popular journal, *Teleskop*, Nadezhdin had been instrumental in popularizing Schellingian philosophy. In 1836, Nadezhdin published a classic elaboration of the Schellingian conception of *narodnost'* in an article entitled 'Europeanism and Narodnost' in Relation to Russian Literature'. 'By *narodnost'*, Nadezhdin wrote, 'I have in mind the totality of all traits, external and internal, physical and spiritual, mental and moral out of which is composed the physiognomy of the Russian person, distinguishing him from all other people.'[51] *Narodnost'*, for Nadezhdin, was the essence of distinctiveness, the well-spring of identity, from which all people, regardless of social standing, derived a consciousness of uniqueness and belonging. While connected with orthodoxy and autocracy in some way (Nadezhdin is never quite clear exactly how), *narodnost'* stood on its own. Rather than making the latter a product of the former two in the style of Uvarov, he, if anything, reversed the order: 'once our literature is national', he concluded, 'it will be orthodox and autocratic'.[52]

Less than a year later, under house arrest in St Petersburg for the publication of Chaadaev's philosophical letter, Nadezhdin gave a very different account of his understanding of *narodnost'*. Referring to his earlier article, he wrote:

> I spoke of *narodnost'* contrasting it to a false Europeanism. But the very name *narodnost'*, after further study, seemed to me dangerous, prone to be misinterpreted in the direction of false ideas... It is well known how *narodnost'* is understood in the West, the spirit in which this word is pronounced and preached. There *narodnost'* means some kind of separate autonomy [*samobytnost'*] of the nation [*narod*]: and is it not in the name of this *narodnost'*, this senseless pride, this dreaming of some kind of autonomy of the nation, that the constant upheavals there are committed. This is why I set about to go even further: to kill the feeling of any kind of separate nationality in our fatherland which up to now has not lived and been aware of itself in any other way than through its autocratic ruler, for which nationality had always consisted of love of the Tsar and obedience, and which in the future should display in itself, to Europe's dismay, a brilliant lesson of how from the holy unity of autocracy, must arise an exemplary and supremely national enlightenment, felicity and glory.[53]

These were, of course, the words of a man trying desperately to extract himself from a difficult and dangerous situation by saying exactly what he believed his interrogators wanted to hear. But in fact, Nadezhdin had articulated and taken to its logical extreme the essence of Official Nationality. Uvarov himself could not have said it with greater precision. Official Nationality was the negation of ethnicity.

The connection Nadezhdin makes between the autocracy and 'national enlightenment, felicity and glory', might appear at first a mere rhetorical flourish. In fact, it points to a critical aspect of Official Nationality – its modernity. Far from being a purely reactionary policy intended to freeze time into an unending glorious present, Official Nationality, in its own way, espoused a vision of progress. No less utopian and messianic than the theories of its nascent opponents, Uvarov's doctrine posited a mythical oneness of ruler and ruled, a complete commonality of interest.[54] Fueled by the autocratic will and steadied by Orthodox belief, the productive forces of the youthful Russian nation would be mobilized and unleashed to create a new civilization drawing from and surpassing all that had come before.[55]

As momentous as Official Nationality, however, was the reaction it provoked. Confronted by an ideology in which, to use Cherniavsky's terminology, the myth of the people was subsumed into the myth of the ruler, Russian intellectuals, themselves the product of Uvarov's modernizing vision, were provoked to redefine the terms of the equation. Unable to accept the premises of Official Nationality, radical intellectuals, beginning in the 1840s, sought to recast the image of the Russian *narod* and in so doing pry it free from the autocratic embrace. In the eyes of the radicals, the *narod* was no longer the outgrowth of autocracy, but rather its antithesis. As such it provided a potent vehicle for the messianic impulse inherent in the Russian idealist philosophy of history, particularly in its Hegalian rendition. In its new guise the *narod* became the universal class, bearer of the idea that would consume the old and bring forth a new era in the world historical process.

Alexander Herzen, with his creative fusion of Slavophile and Westernizing tendencies, illustrates quite clearly the new conception of the *narod*. In 1853 Herzen wrote:

> All political and literary movements from the time of Peter I took place among Russia's privileged classes, among the aristocratic minority, which had accepted together with the reforms of Peter I the civilization of the West. The *narod* did not take

> part in this preparatory movement of enlightenment . . . The *narod*, more oppressed than ever, sacredly preserved its communal institutions, for the preservation of which they were willing to suffer everything all the way up to slavery.[56]

In Herzen's discussion we can see taking shape the tripartite opposition of state, society and *narod* that would become a dominant motif in representations of the Russian body politic through the remainder of the nineteenth century. The *narod* now refers exclusively and unambiguously to the common people whose image would attain its ultimate iconographic expression in the visage of the Russian *muzhik*.[57] The autocratic state is now completely devoid of any national elements – turning Uvarov on his head, the autocrat has become the embodiment of everything alien to Russian culture. If, in the case of Peter the Great, the autocracy had played a useful role in bringing to Russia Western enlightenment, it was now a bankrupt force. Society had absorbed the fruits of enlightenment and become the intelligentsia.[58] Now it was ready to take its place among the people, learning from them and leading them to the radiant future. Only autocracy stood in the way: 'Nicholas I', Herzen complained, 'has deprived us of our tongue just when for the first time there is something for us to say to the people.'[59]

By the mid-nineteenth century, as Herzen's writings demonstrate, the words *narod* and *narodnost'* had arrived at the more or less stable spectrum of meanings which they would continue to preserve into the twentieth century. Fundamentally, this spectrum of meaning can be reduced to the concepts of ethnicity, nationality and the popular masses. The specificity of nationality in Russia, and by extension of Russia's rendition of modernity, can be derived from the correlation of these three concepts. Of the three, ethnicity is, by far, the most stable and consistent. From the seventeenth century onward, *narod* was used to denote the obvious distinctions among peoples arising from language, customs, external appearance, daily life, and so on. This usage ran parallel to the meaning of 'nation' in early modern Western Europe as applied to non-European peoples. In both cases the term provided a conceptual framework for the perception of diversity, allowing the creation of distinctions roughly corresponding to native self-definition.[60] By the mid-eighteenth century, however, the concept of race had replaced nation in Western Europe as a means of classifying non-European populations – the cultural distinctions fostered by the use of 'nation' were blurred and homogenized into a master category predicated on seemingly biological difference. Russia, in contrast, retained the earlier usage. Not only did the racial paradigm fail to take hold in a substantial way in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russia, the importance of ethnicity was reinforced by the adoption of *narodnost'* as a marker of ethnicity. Deeply rooted in the world view of Romantic idealism, *narodnost'* provided a model of ethnicity that was both essentialist – derived from a concept of immutable identity – and at the same time cultural rather than biological in its manifestations. This is, perhaps, one reason why the racial obsessions of Western Europe throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, evoked (with a few significant exceptions) only a limited response in Russia.

Conceptions of nationality in Russia underwent a similarly distinctive path of development. From the time of Peter the Great, we can observe the term *narod* used to denote, not just an ethnic but a political unit – the inhabitants of the state. But like the person of Peter himself, the Petrine State cast a domineering shadow over the Russian nation, to the point that the monarch and the state became the only meaningful defining element of the nation, reduced to little more than a necessary grammatical appendage – the implicit object to the dynamic Petrine subject. By the late eighteenth century, cracks had appeared in the bond between state and nation. Partly in reaction to the all-pervasive Western influence, and partly out of a sense of cultural disequilibrium, belonging neither with the Tsar nor with the people, the newly emancipated nobility began seeking a locus of identity in the history and traditions of Russia.[61] Russians trying to apply the concept of nation to their country were immediately confronted with the problem of definition. What exactly did it mean to be Russian? What was the source of Russianness? The term *narodnost'* arose, in essence, as a means by which to pose these questions. But whatever the response to the problem of nationality – and we have seen the wide variety that were put forward – the role of the people remained ambiguous. The evidence we have examined suggests that up to the reign of Nicholas I the terms *narod* and *narodnost'* were not commonly used to refer exclusively to the common people or the peasantry. *Narod* in the sense of the downtrodden masses sprung out of a mindset of opposition to the autocracy and the institution of serfdom on which it rested.

What, then, are the implications of this pattern of development for Russian nationality and modernity? What is most striking about the relations of the three sides of *narodnost'* is the relative weakness of *narod* as political nation. While Russians were able to accept and integrate the Germanic ideal of the *Volk* as presented by Herder and his followers, the concept of the nation as the repository of popular sovereignty remained stifled. If, in the eighteenth century, the instability arising from the lack of clear principles of succession allowed at least a symbolic allusion to popular sovereignty, by the early nineteenth century the very idea of autocracy seemed to preclude the notion of sovereignty emanating from the people. But the populist concept of the *narod* which we see emerging in the writings of Herzen also stifled Russian nationality by positing a divide between the *narod* and the body politic as a whole. All who were not of the *narod* were alienated from the true source of nationality, which could only be attained by repenting and merging with the masses.

Finally, and perhaps most obviously, Russian nationality was weakened by the contradictions between nation-state and Empire. The autocracy was caught between a national/imperial (*rossiiskoe*) identity which could be used as a vehicle for inclusion while allowing for the preservation of national/ethnic consciousness, and a growing imperative to drape itself in the cloth of Great Russian national culture. Official Nationality under Nicholas I in this regard can be seen as a quixotic effort to preserve and perpetuate an imperial nation in which autocracy transcended ethnicity. The second wave of Official Nationality under Alexander III was of a very different nature. By unequivocally associating itself with Great Russian culture, the autocracy limited the possibilities for civic inclusion through Empire while failing to create a viable national culture uniting monarch, state, society and the popular masses. Despite vigorous efforts to make autocracy national, nationality in Imperial Russia would never be an effective means of mobilization.[62]

But should Russia's weak sense of national cohesion be viewed as a product of backwardness? To pose the question in this manner, it seems to me, merely confuses the issue. A more relevant path of inquiry might focus on the available models of nationhood toward which Russians could orient a trajectory of modernity, and the extent to which these models were applicable. The problem was not Russia's failure to develop nationality, I would argue, but rather the adoption of a form of nationality that was inherently at odds with its status as an empire. Fusing state and nation in a context of ethnic diversity and autocratic rule is no recipe for stability. Modernity demanded from Russia a nation-state but offered little of value in coping with the realities of diversity.

Notes

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1 V. G. Belinskii, 'Literaturnye mechtaniia', in *Izbrannye filosofskie sochineniia* (Moscow, 1948), p. 142.

2 See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, 1992) and Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: the Development of Nationalism in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1994).

3 The Bolgars, for example, are described in the sixteenth-century Kazanskaia istoriia as a 'people, wild and pagan' (*iazyk liut i pogan*). See, S. A. Tokarev, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii* (Moscow, 1965), p. 35. See also M. O. Kosven, 'Materialy k istorii rannei russkoi etnografii (XII–XVII v.v.)' in *Ocherki istorii russkoi etnografii fol'kloristiki i antropologii*, v. 1 (1956), p. 33 and passim; and I. I. Sreznevskii, *Materialy dlia Slovaria drevne-russkogo iazyka po pis'mennym pamiatnikam* (St Petersburg, 1895), t. 3, p. 1647.

4 For example, *bratskie liudi* was a commonly used title for Buriats. See Tokarev, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii*, p. 50.

5 Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, 1994), p. 39. A long and revealing example of this type of language can be found in Tokarev, *Istoriia russkoi etnografii*, pp. 48–51.

6 The complete text of Spafarii's account can be found in *Zapiski Imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva po otdeleniiu etnografii* (St Petersburg, 1882), t. 10, vyp. 1. The use of the term *'narod'* as a mark of ethnicity may have been a manifestation of the Ukrainian cultural influence on Russia in the late seventeenth century. I am grateful to Frank Sysyn for pointing out this possibility.

7 For an overview of eighteenth-century ethnography see Tokarev, pp. 75–110; N. Knight, 'Constructing the Science of Nationality: Ethnography in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1994); and Yuri Slezkine, 'Naturalists vs Nations: 18th Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity' in *Russia's Orient* (Bloomington, 1997).

8 On the development and use of the term 'nation' in Western Europe see Nicholas Hudson, 'From Nation to Race: the Origin of Racial Clas-

sification in Eighteenth Century Thought', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, v. 29, no. 3 (1996), pp. 247–59; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, ch. 1; Boyd C. Shafer, *Faces of Nationalism: New Reality and Old Myths* (New York, 1972) p. 14; Louis L. Snyder, *The Meaning of Nationalism* (New York, 1968), pp. 14–17.

9 William Temple, *Essay upon the Origine and Nature of Government* (1672) quoted in Hudson, 'From Nation to Race', p. 251. See also Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 214 and passim.

10 Hudson, 'From Nation to Race', p. 257.

11 The actual use of the term 'race' as an instrument of classification was advocated most strongly by Buffon. See Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity, Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), pp. 96–106.

12 Hudson, 'From Nation and Race', pp. 254–8.

13 For example, John VI, 14 is translated in the eleventh century Ostromir Evangelary, 'Videv'she narodi znamenie, ezhe stvori Is, glazkhu, iako s' est' v"istinu prrk."' *Slovar' russkogo iazyka, XI–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1983), vyp. 10, p. 214.

14 A survey of Vladimir Dal's *Poslovitsy Russkogo naroda* (Moscow, 1959) reveals that the word *narod* appears fairly infrequently in popular proverbs, and when it does it is almost always in the sense of assembled humanity. Examples include: 'narod glup: vse v kuchu lezet', 'Valis narod ot Iauzskikh vorot', 'V narode, chto v tuche: v grozy vse naruzhu vyidet'. At times there is a religious overtone as in 'glas naroda – glas bozhii'. See pp. 405–6. It is interesting to note that the word *narod* does not appear at all in the long section on ethnic stereotypes (pp. 346–50). There is also no evidence of *narod* used to denote only the lower classes or peasants.

15 For a typical example from the Time of Troubles see S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia rossii's drevneishikh vremen* (Moscow, 1961), kn. 5, p. 8. Perhaps one of the most important figurative connotations was the idea of a '*pravoslavnyi narod*', the community of orthodox believers. I am grateful to Laurie Manchester for bringing this point to my attention.

16 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*, v. 2, no. 905, pp. 373–4.

17 On the question of the authorship of *Pravda voli monarshei*, see James Cracraft, 'Did Feofan Prokopovich Really Write *Pravda voli monarshei*?' *Slavic Review*, v. 40, no. 2 (Summer 1981), pp. 173–93.

18 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, v. 7 (1726), p. 623.

19 Ibid., p. 624.

20 A use of *narod* in the sense of popular sovereignty can be seen in the famous 'conditions' of 1730s signed by Anna Ioannovna. Anna's ascension to the throne is characterized as 'po obshchemu zhelaniiu vserossiiskogo naroda'. See D. A. Korsakov, *Votsarenie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny* (Kazan, 1891), p. 17. For an English translation see Marc Raeff, *Plans for Political Reform in Imperial Russia, 1730–1905* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966). For a discussion of the successions of Elizabeth and Catherine II see N. I. Pavlenko, 'Idei Absolutisma v zakonodatel'stve XVIII v.', in *Absoliutism v Rossii (XVII–XVIII vv.)* (Moscow, 1964), pp.

394–5. My thinking here has also been influenced by Cynthia H. Whittaker, 'Self-Depiction Among Monarchs: the Accession Manifesto as Apologia'. Paper presented at AAASS annual convention (Seattle, 1997).

21 For a discussion of the processes of 'representing the nation' in a somewhat later context see Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in the Russian Monarchy* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 298–9.

22 On the crisis of 1730 see Brenda Meehan-Waters, *Autocracy and Aristocracy: the Russian Service Elite of 1730* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1982), ch. 6.

23 Note, for example, the opening paragraphs of Catherine II's Charter to the Nobility of 1785 in which the vastness and diversity of Russia are referred to as the 'fruit' and 'consequence' of the 'obedient, brave, fearless, enterprising and strong all-Russian [*rossiiskii*] *narod* . . .' *Dvorianskaia imperiia XVIII veka: osnovskye zakonodatel'nye akty, sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 150–1. The context and the use of the word *'rossiiskii'* suggest a concept of *narod* derived not from ethnicity but from being a subject of the Empire.

24 Novikov takes the naive position in his essay that the common people have no reason and are therefore more like animals. Throughout he uses the terms *prostoi narod, krestianin* and *prostoliudiny*. *Narod* appears unmodified only in the last sentence in a context which at least leaves open the possibility that he is not just referring to the peasantry. Novikov's exact words are: 'Pust' narod pogruzhen v neznanii; no Ia sie govoriu bogatym i znatnym, utesniaiushchim chelovechestvo v podobnom sebe sozdanii.' (Let us admit that the nation is weighed down with ignorance, but I say this to the rich and mighty who deny the humanity in a being like themselves.) It would seem at least plausible that the 'rich and mighty' were also a part of the 'nation weighed down by ignorance'. N. I. Novikov, 'Rech' o sushchestve prostogo naroda', *Smes'* no. 25 (1769) published in L. B. Lekhtblau, ed., *Russkie satiricheskie zhurnaly* (Moscow, 1940), p. 85. See also Hans Rogger, *National Consciousness in Eighteenth Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 178–9.

25 On the pan-European folklore movement see Giuseppe Cocchiara, *The History of Folklore in Europe* (Philadelphia, 1981); and Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978).

26 As late as 1788, Ivan Boltin, in his rebuttal to the French historian Leclerc asserted that folk songs did not represent the *narod* but rather the rabble, the *chern'*. See N. N. Trubitsyn, *O narodnoi poezii v obshchestvennom i literaturnom obikhode pervoi treti XIX veka* (St Petersburg, 1912), p. 200. For an overview of Russian folklore in the eighteenth century see M. K. Azadovskii, *Istoriia russkoi fol'kloristiki* (Moscow, 1958), v. 1.

27 M. Popov, *Rossiiskaia erata* (St Petersburg, 1792), p. XXV. For discussion of Popov see Azadovskii, *Istoriia russkoi fol'kloristiki*, p. 78.

28 A. N. Radishchev, *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu. Vol'nost'* (St Petersburg, 1992), p. 8.

29 On the L'vov/Prach collection see Knight, 'Constructing the Science of Nationality', pp. 53–7; and Azadovskii, *Istoriia russkoi fol'kloristiki*, pp. 74–5.

30 See Peter Christoff, *The Third Heart: Some Intellectual-Ideological Currents and Cross Currents in Russia, 1800–1830* (The Hague, 1970).

31 On Classicism and Romanticism and the influence of de Staël see B. V. Tomashevskii, *Pushkin i Frantsiia* (Leningrad, 1960), pp. 12–20. See also Peter Christoff, *The Third Heart*, pp. 24–5.

32 Frederic Ancillon, *Essais de Philosophie de Politique et de Littérature* (Paris, 1832), pp. 227–8.

33 Ibid., p. 230.

34 *Ostaf'evskii arkhiv kniazei Viazemskikh* (St Petersburg, 1899), v. 1, p. 357.

35 Ibid., p. 376.

36 See Katya Hokanson, 'Literary Imperialism, *Narodnost'* and Pushkin's Invention of the Caucasus', *Russian Review*, v. 53, no. 3 (July 1993), pp. 339–40; Azadovskii, *Istoriia russkoi fol'kloristiki*, v. 1, pp. 193–4. Somov's original article appeared in *Sorevnovatel'*, no. 9 (1823). It can also be found in Orest Somov, *Selected Prose in Russian* (Ann Arbor, 1974).

37 A. S. Pushkin, 'O narodnosti', in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Moscow, 1962), t. 6, pp. 267–8. For a detailed discussion see Tomashevskii, *Pushkin i Frantsiia*, pp. 23–40.

38 Tomashevskii, *Pushkin i Frantsiia*, p. 22.

39 Quoted in Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New York, 1969), p. 136.

40 For example, Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism* (Cambridge, MA, 1961), pp. 70–1.

41 P. N. Miliukov, *Glavnye techeniia russkoi istoricheskoi mysli* (St Petersburg, 1913), pp. 278–9.

42 A. N. Pypin, *Kharakteristiki literaturnykh mnenii ot dvadtsatykh do piatidesiatykh godov* (St Petersburg, 1906), p. 201.

43 Lauren G. Leighton has argued forcefully against the notion that Schelling was a significant source for Russian conceptions of *narodnost'*, a misconception that she unequivocally dubs 'the Schelling error'. See Lauren G. Leighton, '*Narodnost'* as a Problem in Russian Romanticism' in *Russian Romanticism: Two Essays* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 103–5 and passim. In a sense, though, her argument misses the point. Certainly Schelling himself had little if anything original to say about nationality and his early followers in Russia played almost no role in the first discussions of *narodnost'*. What is important, though, is the way in which thinkers of the next generation (Polevoi, Pogodin, Nadezhdin, Chaadaev, and so on) applied the assumptions and methodology of Schelling's philosophical system to the problem of nationality.

44 Perhaps the best summary in English of Schellingian idealism in Russian thought can be found in Malia, *Alexander Herzen*, ch. 5. Miliukov's discussion in *Glavnye techeniia russkoi istoricheskoi mysli* is also quite helpful.

45 From his *Istoricheskie aforismy*. Quoted in Miliukov, *Glavnye techeniia*, pp. 285–6.

46 Miliukov, *Glavnye techeniia*, p. 290.

47 Ibid., p. 299.

48 On Uvarov's intellectual roots see Cynthia Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: an Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786–1855* (DeKalb, 1984), pp. 19–23, 49. Andrei Zorin has recently suggested that Uvarov drew heavily upon the ideas of Friedrich Schlegel

as a basis for his doctrine of 'Orthodox, Autocracy and Nationality'. See his article in the recent collection *V Razdum'e o Rossii* (Moscow, 1998). Zorin's thesis is, in fact, quite plausible. Schlegel, whom Uvarov met as a young diplomat in Vienna, based his vision of nationality on the traditions of the Hapsburg monarchy, its historical role as the defender of the faith and the organic ties between the monarchy and the nobility. Thus Schlegel's 'nationality' had little in common with the more familiar ideas of Herder, Fichte and their followers. Uvarov's inability, which Zorin documents quite thoroughly, to perceive the ideological incompatibility between Schlegel and his Prussian associates is very revealing in this regard.

49 For numerous illustrations see Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley, 1959), pp. 124–66.

50 Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, pp. 297–332.

51 N. I. Nadezhdin, 'Evropeism i narodnost' v otnoshenii k russkoi slovesnosti', in *Literaturnaia kritika. Estetika* (Moscow, 1972), p. 440.

52 Ibid., p. 444.

53 Institut Russkoi Literatury (IRLI) (Pushkinskii dom), f. 93, op. 3, no. 881, l. 10.

54 Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, p. 153.

55 On the utopian dimensions of Official Nationality see Alexandre Koyre, *La Philosophie et le problème national en Russie au début de XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1929); Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education*, pp. 94–110.

56 A. I. Herzen, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Moscow, 1954) v. 12, p. 74.

57 Cathy A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late 19th Century Russia* (New York, 1993).

58 Herzen, of course, did not use the term *intelligentsia* which only appeared in the Russian language in the early 1860s. See Alan Pollard, 'The Russian Intelligentsia: the Mind of Russia', *California Slavic Studies*, v. 3 (1964), pp. 1–32.

59 Herzen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, v. 12, p. 78.

60 Hodgen, 'From Nation to Race', p. 214.

61 For discussion of these issues see Hans Rogger, *National Consciousness in Eighteenth Century Russia*; Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*; and Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York, 1966).

62 For discussion of national policies in late Imperial Russia see Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb, 1996).

Part II

Reform and Revolution as Modern Moments

4

To Make a Difference: the Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics, 1861–1917

Charles Steinwedel

Differences abounded among people living in the Tsar's vast domain. Imperial subjects spoke different languages, practiced different forms of agriculture, had different physical appearances, cooked differently, and worshiped different higher powers. Cataloging these characteristics preoccupied historians, writers, and ethnographers.[1] Some of these distinctions became fundamental categories according to which the Tsarist regime organized the Empire's polity, while others remained politically unmarked. In this essay, I address the process by which a particular type of distinction, ethnicity, became an important category according to which political actors classified the Empire's population and how, consequently, the population began to identify itself by ethnicity in political life. Ethnic identifications resulted neither from impersonal forces nor from efforts of a small coterie of nationalist politicians, but were produced by a variety of actors in particular political contexts. For this reason, I consider difference 'a discrimination or distinction viewed as conceived by the subject rather than as existing in the objects', a definition of 'difference' which survives in contemporary English only in the phrase 'to make a difference'.[2] In the period 1861–1917, the Empire's institutions and political elites increasingly made differences among its population based on ethnic criteria. A person's ethnicity acquired serious implications in political life.[3]

My project examines how the Tsarist regime gave meaning to and constituted ethnicity in one region, Bashkiria.[4] My argument for the making of ethnicity as a political category has two parts. I analyze the concepts used by the political elite in Bashkiria – the governor, educational and religious officials and political activists – to describe and categorize the population, and how such concepts' meaning and usage changed over time. Secondly, I address the implications of these concepts for the exercise of political power, and how their articulation in institutions and political practices began to organize a society according to ethnicity.

Historians in the West, in the Soviet Union, and in the Russian Federation writing on the 'national question' in the Tsar's Empire generally assume a priori the importance of nations and discuss the process of 'national awakenings' by which a national intelligentsia is formed and makes a nation.[5] Assessments of the imperial regime vary, however. Authors typically consider the Empire primarily either anti-ethnic, Russo-centric or non-ethnic. Quite commonly, historians consider the Imperial regime essentially repressive. They argue that it sought to suppress ethnicity, and especially that of non-Russians.[6] More recently, scholars have focused on the Tsarist regime's cultural policies and how, especially after 1881, the regime aimed to Russify the Empire and to build a Russian national state through the promotion of Russian language and culture.[7] Finally, some scholars view the regime as a fundamentally conservative structure which neither repressed ethnicity with great firmness nor promoted Russian ethnicity with much vigor. The regime's policy was essentially pragmatic, defensive, and aimed at preserving state power with a minimum amount of domestic conflict.[8]

Until recently, analyses of the 'national question' in the Soviet Union differed little from treatments of its Tsarist predecessor. Scholars took for granted aspirations to nationhood in the Soviet Union, condemned efforts to promote Soviet-style homogenization as repressive, and viewed the toleration of national cultures as contrived to advance the Sovietization of national groups. By contrast, recent essays by Yuri Slezkine, Rogers Brubaker, and Ronald Suny describe the Soviet state's sincerity and power in the promotion of ethnic particularism (Slezkine), the institutionalization of nationhood at a sub-state level (Brubaker), or nation-making (Suny). Using different vocabularies and evidence, the three authors argue that the Bolsheviks consistently classified the population according to nationality and actively institutionalized ethnoterritorial federalism despite major transformations in the Soviet regime.

By demonstrating that an avowedly supra-national regime constituted rather than suppressed nationality, the three authors powerfully reinterpret Soviet policy and argue for the uniqueness to the Soviet era of classification according to ethnicity/nationality. These authors do not ignore the relationship of the Tsarist regime to ethnic formation,[9] but the fundamental difference of the Soviet regime's nationality policy from its Tsarist predecessor is a basic assumption of their analysis. They argue that the Tsarist regime lacked an 'official view of what constituted nationality', classified its population only by religion, and 'never institutionalized multiethnicity'.[10] In their accounts, the Soviet approach to nationality emerged from Marxist-Leninist thought. The Tsarist regime's intervention in the formation of ethnicity is considered mostly a negative one.[11]

By contrast, Katherine Verdery, drawing on Fredrik Barth's assumption that ethnicity is a product of particular interactional, historical, economic, and political circumstances, has argued for the importance of *all* state formations in making differences significant.[12] The state gives social and political significance to, and organizes, differences such as ethnicity, gender, locality, class and race that previously had not been organized as such. The state identifies its similar subjects, as well as differentiating them from those of other states.[13] She focuses on the modern nation-state formation, arguing that nation-states create 'myths of homogeneity' to stabilize the process by which various groups 'strive for legitimacy' and 'to create a space amenable to management'. At the same time as nation-states seek to integrate their 'putatively similar subjects' into a homogeneous group, a nation, they make ethnic differences significant.

Though she identifies 'modern nation-states' as most insistent on the ascription of ethnic identity, Verdery's work suggests that state formations which do not represent themselves as nation-states, such as the Russian Empire, also merit scrutiny as contexts for ethnic categorization. Empires, as Alain de Benoist has argued, differ from nation-states with respect to the degree of homogenization they aim to achieve. Unlike the nation-state with its relentless tendency toward homogenization, an empire 'associates different peoples' but it does not seek to eliminate all cultural and ethnic differences.[14] The population which the empire integrates may perceive integration as oppressive. Yet, fundamentally, political elites in empires recognize diversity as an inevitable feature of the body politic and do not have a 'myth of homogeneity' of the force achieved in a nation-state. Despite the absence of a powerful 'myth of homogeneity', however, empires nonetheless classify their populations according to economic potential and political reliability in order to make them 'manageable'. Ethnicity is one important category according to which the elites of an empire make such classifications. The acceptance of diversity within an empire along with ethnic classification has the effect of reifying differences and reinforcing diversity, sometimes to the point of promoting it.

I do not deny the important innovations which distinguished the Soviet Union from the Tsarist regime, including passport nationality, territorial ethnicity, and the active promotion of ethnic cultures. I argue, however, that political institutions and processes within the Tsarist regime should be analyzed as contexts which produced ethnic identities. Although the regime may not have codified an 'official view' of ethnicity or nationality, it made such conceptions, however imprecise, important in the lives of the Empire's subjects. The ordering of society by ethnicity thus came from within the institutions of the Old Regime, which provided the groundwork for developments under the Soviet regime.[15]

The case of Bashkiria

My focus on ethnicity in one region, Bashkiria, results from the belief that ethnicity and ethnic classifications form through interactions of people and institutions on the local level, and that the Russian Empire provided distinct local environments which merit investigation.[16] Undeniably, the center had a tremendous influence on ethnic processes. Intellectuals and officials in the capitals began to debate the meanings of ethnicity and nationality as early as the first half of the nineteenth century.[17] Yet the regime could implement ethnic conceptions of the body politic only through political practices and institutions which varied throughout the Empire. Furthermore, the mix of religious and estate identities and the presence of numerous politically unmarked differences within a given region's population shaped the manner by which the regime constituted ethnic categories. Although the making of ethnicity as a political category was certainly not unique to Bashkiria, the process by which it took place was specific to the region.

Bashkiria presents rich material for the study of ethnic classification. It came fully under Tsarist rule in the first half of the eighteenth century. The center of Bashkiria, Ufa province, was considered part of European Russia by 1900 and had an administrative structure nearly identical to those in provinces of 'central' Russia. Yet only about 40 per cent of Ufa province's population was Orthodox

Christian and listed Russian as its native language in 1897. The majority, approximately 55 per cent, was Muslim, and the province had the largest Muslim population of any in the Empire. The presence of a strong Russian, Orthodox culture, Tatar and Bashkir Muslim cultures, as well as pagans and recent in-migrants of various origins made ethnic categorizations particularly complicated and important.

The language of ethnicity in Bashkiria

As suggested above, the making of ethnicity as a political category required both a language with which to discuss the concept and the articulation of the concept in institutions and political practices.[18] Some historians have addressed the concepts of ethnicity and nationality in Russian history, but explication of their meanings in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century politics is lacking.[19] Historians of Russia often unreflectively reproduce categories used in the past or read contemporary categories into historical sources. Group labels were plentiful in Bashkiria – Russian, Tatar, Bashkir, Cheremis (now Mari), and so on – but what did such labels mean in political life? Through an analysis of archival and published materials regarding Bashkiria, I will analyze ethnic categories used to describe the body politic. My analysis does not pretend to be exhaustive – not all political actors are represented or all terms adequately addressed. Yet my research suggests that after 1890, and especially after the Revolution of 1905, two terms, *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*, became increasingly crucial to discussions of groups in the Empire's body politic. *Narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*, both of which are typically translated as nationality, did not replace classifications such as estate, religion, tribe (*plemia*), or alien (*inorodets*), but they came to supplement or take precedence over the latter terms in political discourse. I will briefly discuss the usage of related classifications before addressing *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*.

Classification by estate and religious confession (*veroispovedanie*) remained fundamental until the end of the Imperial period. Before the 1890s, estate so dominated the thought of officials in Bashkiria that they specifically denied the importance of ethnic particularity. In 1871, the Orenburg Governor General argued that the Bashkirs had been given civil status identical to that of the peasant estate except with respect to land ownership. Thus administrative arrangements regarding them should be the same as they were for other peasants.[20] Estate classifications had such power that markers later considered ethnic were occasionally subsumed under them. In one 1879 survey, a statistician categorized entire villages (not persons) as Russian, Bashkir, or Tatar under the heading *zvaniia*, or 'estate status'.[21] Similarly, religious confession remained the identification which appeared on one's service record (*formuliarnyi spisok*), and was generally the basis for discriminations in privileges and rights.[22] Local censuses and directories reflected the importance of religion and estate.[23]

Before the 1890s, when writers sought to indicate cultural or ethnic difference, they most commonly chose the words 'tribe' (*plemia*) or 'alien' (*inorodets*). *Plemia* suggested a generic difference among people, the sense of being from different groups by birth or clan.[24] The term did not necessarily indicate backwardness or suggest someone was primitive, and it was less politically marked than *narodnost'*. An 1886 census of the city of Ufa, for instance, classified as tribes Russians as well as Tatars, Cheremis (Mari), and foreigners such as British and French persons.[25] *Plemia* meant a particular group but did not contain a judgement as to whether the people had a spirit or destiny or indicate their status within the Empire. Beginning in the 1890s, *plemia* was used with decreasing frequency in the presentation of statistical material regarding the local population.

The term 'alien' appeared quite frequently as a marker of difference throughout the period 1865–1917.[26] Although 'alien' was a legal estate category applied to various peoples indigenous to Siberia in 1822, by the 1860s a broader, cultural sense prevailed in Bashkiria.[27] As Slezkine suggests, the word could mean 'non-Christian' or developmentally 'backward'. After 1905, as John Slocum has argued, the term *inorodets* continued to suggest religious and developmental difference, but it acquired a linguistic meaning as well.[28] When the Ufa zemstvo published materials in 'alien' languages, it listed the pamphlets according to the language in which they were published, Tatar or Chuvash. The multiple meanings of *inorodets* suggest confusion as to the conception of difference the term was supposed to indicate. The term became even more common after 1905 as a way to group non-Russian peoples whose interests became more evident but whose nature was often not well understood. Classificatory material which used the term 'alien' nearly always broke down the category more precisely by ethnic or national group.

The words *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* were used before the 1890s to indicate particular groups distinguished from others primarily by language, but also by religion and by way of life. Neither saw extensive usage as ways of classifying populations, but officials employed *narodnost'* much more frequently than *natsional'nost'*.[29] After the 1890s *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* emerged from under estate status's shadow. The terms began to supplement or even supersede religious confession as a classification in political discourse. Guidebooks to Ufa province dropped religious identification. In written reports, ethnic categories which had been considered secondary to religion were increasingly hyphenated with it, as in the case of 'Tatar-Muslim'. In the immediate aftermath of 1905, expressions appeared which subsumed religious faith itself under '*narodnost'* ' or '*natsional'nost'* ', as part of the population was described as 'of Muslim *narodnost'* '.[30] An understanding of how these terms were used requires consideration of the two words, *narod* and *natsiia*, from which they were derived.

Two non-ethnic uses of the term *narod* appear in late Imperial sources from Bashkiria, one social and another territorial or administrative. The first has received substantial attention in the historical literature as a horizontal divide among the population: the 'people' were considered something separate from those above them – 'society' (*obshchestvo*). The other definition refers to all the people 'born in a certain space' or 'residents of a state, a country, who are under one administration'.[31] A territorial or political usage of the term, with a shading of horizontal divide, was most prevalent in Bashkiria throughout the period. The institutions established by the local administration and the zemstvo to bring culture to the province were called '*narodnye doma*' (people's houses) and were intended to serve both Russians and non-Russians with native-language materials. The existence of a less common, particularistic usage of *narod*, however, as people 'speaking one language' and as '*plemia*' complicates an attempt at a simple definition. A definition of *narod* with obvious ethnic implications was not often used in Bashkiria, but it did appear. In 1906, when one official wrote that Ufa province had 'many peoples', he had in mind various native groups, not foreigners.[32] *Narodnost'* carried this particularistic meaning of *narod*,[33] and appeared frequently in texts and in the presentation of statistical material.

Just as the word *narod* has embedded in it universal and particular definitions, so does *natsiia*, a foreign import from the late eighteenth century for the word 'nation'. The word 'nation' did not always indicate all a state's citizens or a people with a collective spirit and sense of destiny in the tradition of Herder and Hegel. Nation comes from the Latin *natio*, which indicated a group of people 'who belonged together in some way because of similarity of birth'.[34] The word meant a community not of Romans but of foreigners, Jews or Syrians, for instance. Later, in medieval and early modern university and religious life, nation came to designate a community of opinion. Only in the French Revolution's wake did nation come to mean all a republic's people as in France or the United States. In addition to the universalistic definition of nation, there existed a particularistic definition of nation as an ethnically distinct group within a state's jurisdiction. The Russian *natsiia* corresponded to the secondary, particularistic, definition of the Russian word *narod*. For these reasons, the similarity and interchangeability of *narod* and *natsiia, narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* become clear. Materials from Bashkiria confirm that the words were used more or less interchangeably, and that both words could be applied to peoples of various types.[35]

In 1905 the concept of 'national sovereignty' came into Russia in full force. Among liberals and those to their left, the idea of 'national self-determination' became current, which saw ethnic nation-states as the outcome of ethnic consciousness. When Ufa's liberal zemstvo board spoke of the *'natsional'nyi dukh'* (national spirit) or *'natsional'nyi tip'* (national type) of the Muslims,[36] they were making a religious group into a national group in a Hegelian sense. The group was no longer just an ethnically particular group within the Empire, but one with a historic destiny culminating in nationhood. A group's distinctiveness within the Empire took on greater meaning. The change in status from ethnic difference to nationality was captured by a Belebei county zemstvo report. Rejecting plans of the provincial zemstvo board to build libraries specifically for the 'aliens', the Belebei board argued that such a move expressed 'the aspiration to isolate the aliens of Ufa province by way of nationalizing [*natsionalizatsii*] them'.[37] Using similar language toward a different end, the provincial zemstvo's Director of Alien Education criticized the Ministry of Education because its policies regarded 'aliens not as separate, distinctively developing *narodnosti*, but as *narodnosti* subject to Russification in the end, which corresponds neither to the spiritual, nor the national [*natsional'nyi*] interests of the aliens'.[38]

The usage of *narodnost'* in this passage suggests the interchangeability of *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*. It also suggests the difference between an ethnic group as a distinct group within the Empire whose fate is intimately connected with that of the dominant group, and a nationality with a 'spirit' and a distinct path of future development.

There was no consensus on these concepts implications. For some, being a *narodnost'* or *natsional'nost'* meant that a group should receive recognition within the political system, such as representation in state institutions and the ability to use its language in the schools. Others favored cultural autonomy and self-government for Russia's peoples within the framework of empire. Still others believed the existence of national groups indicated a dangerous fracturing of the body politic which threatened the Empire's integrity and the autocracy. The Tsarist regime could tolerate ethnic distinctions, but groups with a national spirit or consciousness acquired powerful identities outside the autocracy and were incompatible with it. The political implications of the concepts were not resolved by the end of the Old Regime.

After 1890, the use of *narodnost'* or *natsional'nost'* to classify populations became increasingly common. Gendarmes recorded the *narodnost'* of those arrested.[39] In 1894, a questionnaire used to collect information on settlers in Ufa specifically asked for their *natsional'nost'*.[40] In 1906, one writer in the local newspaper analyzed the 1897 census results and broke down the population by *narodnost'*. Even though the census gathered information only on native language, estate, and religion, the writer chose to highlight the population's *narodnost'*, separating the Tatars and the Bashkirs because of their different 'ways of life'.[41] In 1912 those qualified to vote in the Fourth Duma were classified by *natsional'nost'*.[42]

An agricultural census conducted shortly after February 1917 presents perhaps the clearest example of how ethnicity had become a fundamental classification. The census asked for the estate and *natsional'nost'* of each respondent.[43] The precise definition of who was of which nationality was not fixed by this point. Yet the fact that the question was asked, people answered it, and the zemstvo could present coherent results showed the great change in ethnic classification which had taken place in the 38 years since Russian, Bashkir, and Tatar had been called *zvaniia*.

Ethnicity in institutions and administrative practices

A full consideration of ethnicity's use in institutions and administrative practices is far beyond the bounds of this essay. I give the following three examples to suggest some ways that ethnic conceptions of the body politic became important.[44]

Revolutionary politics of 1905–7

The Revolution of 1905 and the politics which emerged from it became a catalyst for the ascription of ethnicity. The collapse of existing authority called into question the viability of a regime based upon estate and religious confession since opponents of autocracy came from various estates and religions. As the regime sought to transform passively obedient subjects into actively loyal ones, some officials sought new means with which to categorize supporters and opponents of autocracy, and new principles which could knit together the body politic.

In doing so, the political elite introduced into politics a language of loyalty and patriotism to the Tsar and the fatherland which had not previously had a prominent role in local life. As late as 1895, Ufa's governor reported to the Tsar that 'all was in order' in the province, meaning 'the tranquility' (*spokoistvie*) of the province had 'not been violated in any way'.[45] The governor did not think in terms of the presence or absence of support for the Tsarist regime as long as no one defied the law. Beginning in 1905, the language of patriotism began to penetrate local political life, promoted by the administration. Supporters of the regime formed 'patriotic' societies, took part in 'patriotic demonstrations', and printed 'patriotic' appeals. This patriotism at its core was not specific to any class or ethnic group. A patriotic society existed in the railroad shop, the center of anti-state demonstrations, and publications of the right identified several Muslims and Tatars as loyal. Patriotism consisted of allegiance to the Tsar above all else.

Yet nearly from the beginning, ethnic markers were used to label some local officials as insufficiently patriotic. Even the governor, the Tsar's representative in Ufa province, was called a 'Pole' and a traitor for not being stern enough in handling the October 1905 disturbances.[46] One appeal to the 'Russian people' described the regime as full of non-Russians: 'Where is Russian authority [*nachal'stvo*]? . . . all Mother Russia is filled with Poles, Yids, Finns, Swedes, and Germans. Where are Russians?' . . . Starting with the governor and ending with his lackey – all are Poles.'[47]

Such politics were confined generally to the far-right parties, but were part of a larger pattern by which the regime was identified with Russian ethnicity. Pursuing interests other than ethnic Russian ones could have serious political consequences. In 1909, the Ufa governor refused to confirm a Russian as chairman and a Tatar as a member of the Belebei county zemstvo board because Muslims had used their position of strength in Belebei county to elect a 'Kadet-Muslim bloc' which promoted the Muslims' 'purely national demands'. The governor opposed 'public' (*obshchestvennyi*) interests to 'Tatar-National' interests, in effect identifying the public interest as a Russian one. The governor then promoted the ethnic principle over estate or property by replacing the elected zemstvo board members with less-qualified Russians.[48] By identifying the regime increasingly with Russian ethnicity, officials undermined the notion of the Empire's elite as a multiethnic nobility held together by mutual loyalties and identification with the Sovereign.

Movement of peoples: migrants and refugees

Because of the large amount of sparsely populated land in Bashkiria, the area became a destination for many people who left central and western Russia in search of land. By 1897, officially registered recent migrants made up about one-tenth of the province's population. After 1896, resettlement became even easier and the numbers of in-migrants increased.[49]

Migration itself did not demand the creation of ethnic categories to define Bashkiria's new residents. Since at least the seventeenth century, people from other regions had come to Bashkiria. Yet after the Great Reforms, the local administration perceived its mission as incorporating the local population into a civic order which would foster a productive population. Newcomers who 'lived outside the law' could not be managed effectively to provide taxes and recruits.[50] The newcomers were not all alike, either. Many came from nearby provinces, but some came from other regions entirely. Their different agricultural practices were often perceived as better developed than those of local Bashkirs. Officials and writers associated different ethnic groups with different levels of agricultural development. Therefore when the regime collected information on migrants to the province, it asked for their place of origin and their *natsional'nost'*.[51] Both Ufa's and neighboring Orenburg's provincial administrations encouraged the in-migration of a 'Russian element' which would settle among the traditionally nomadic Bashkirs and influence their 'way of life' in the direction of settled, productive agriculture.[52] The local administration thus encouraged the close habitation of groups with distinct ways of life.

The movement of refugees to Bashkiria during the First World War accentuated the development of ethnic communities and the perception of their importance.[53] Latvian, Polish, Catholic, and Muslim aid societies appeared by 1917.[54] The combination of social disruption caused by the war and the diversion of resources to support the army caused such groups to become crucial providers of social welfare.[55] Along with a Jewish organization, they became part of the official network of institutions aiding members of their ethnic and religious groups who found themselves refugees or whose family labor power had been mobilized. Ethnicity became a key factor in whether one received aid, how much one received, and who provided it.

Education

Educational institutions featured the most intensive development and articulation of ethnic concepts of any institutions in Bashkiria. Because language and the transformation of the subject are the means and the goal of education, central authorities, missionaries and local self-administrative units dealt with the question of ethnicity. Although their approaches were quite different, they used ethnicity to organize educational programs. Missionary Nikolai Il'minskii's approach to native-language education is perhaps best known. 'Only the mother tongue', Il'minskii argued, 'can truly, rather than only superficially, set the people on the path of Christianity.'[56] Il'minskii aimed specifically to spread Orthodoxy through his schools, and sought to do so in a way that allowed non-Russians 'to maintain their ethnicity [*narodnost'*] which is so dear to them'.[57] Since Il'minskii's missionary schools in particular and central state policy in general and their relation to ethnicity have received substantial attention elsewhere, I will focus on local dimensions of the question.[58]

The Ufa provincial zemstvo, reflecting the left's programs in the State Duma and the Empire's political life, advocated bilingual instruction, but toward secular ends, not Il'minskii's religious objectives. The zemstvo elite believed that the most fundamental divide in the Empire was that between the enlightened and the ignorant, not between members of different religious or ethnic groups. The zemstvo leaders sought to bridge this divide through education. The zemstvos' vision of enlightenment was not specific to one ethnic group, and may be termed civic inclusion.[59] They sought to create a political identity in which the language of politics would be primarily Russian. Yet zemstvo elites sought to separate this political identity from ethnic and religious identities which would exist along with it. The persistence of ethnic and religious differences was assumed; zemstvo initiatives supported non-Orthodox, non-Russian cultures, and Muslim and other non-Russian elites participated in the development of zemstvo programs. For these reasons, the zemstvo board strongly supported native-language instruction for the entire course of study for all groups with developed literary cultures, and sought to appoint teachers of the same nationality (*natsional'nost'*) and religion as their students when possible.

In addition to its often-frustrated efforts to influence the ministry's school policy, the zemstvo established a department of extracurricular education (*vneshkol'noe obrazovanie*). The department planned a four-tier system of institutions which would organize all educational activities for which it was responsible, including preschool education, teacher training, textbooks, professional education, libraries, and public lectures.[60] The zemstvo did not create separate institutions according to a local population's ethnicity, but did specify that a community should receive programs in its own language. The zemstvo developed programs for the non-Russian speaking population, and one of its staff, Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, later prominent after February 1917, was a very popular lecturer.[61] The zemstvo also sought to stock libraries with native-language reading matter and published pamphlets in Tatar, Chuvash, and Cheremiss languages, in addition to subscribing to periodicals in these languages. On the county level, two zemstvos in the province began to support new-method (*jadid*) Muslim confessional schools which instructed students in their native language.

Missionaries and zemstvo activists had different priorities with respect to education. Yet through their promotion of native-language instruction and the establishment of educational institutions on the basis of ethnicity, they promoted an ethnic organization of the population.

Conclusion

The making of ethnicity as a category in late Imperial political life required the development of a language of ethnicity. In the period 1865 to 1917, the terms *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* were ascribed to people with increasing frequency as markers primarily of linguistic difference and also of different religious practices and 'ways of life'. These terms came to stand alongside estate and to supplement or replace religious confession as indicators of a person's economic and political potential. The two terms reflected varying conceptions of difference within the Empire. Some saw them as indicating what we would consider ethnic difference, the characteristics of which distinguish one group from another but do not necessarily make claims as to the future development and destiny of a people. Others considered them to reflect national distinctions which put a people on a course toward the transformation of its spirit into political institutions and perhaps political sovereignty. Though these terms carried different implications to different people, by the end of the Tsarist regime, they indicated an important framework for political struggle.

The formation of the category of ethnicity and its employment in politics cannot be separated. The development of ethnic conceptions took place through political practices which gave them meaning. In different ways, the classification of migrants to Bashkiria and the work of educational institutions provide examples of how the Tsarist regime promoted the organization of a polity based upon ethnic or national distinctions. The officials and institutions of late Imperial Russia sometimes attempted to suppress manifestations of ethnicity, sometimes promoted homogenization of the body politic on the basis of Russian ethnicity, and sought to preserve the integrity of the Tsarist state. Yet the end result cannot be described as conservative because the regime played a key role in shaping how difference would be articulated. The regime actively participated in the categorization of the population according to ethnicity and in doing so gave ethnically defined groups a coherence they had previously lacked.

The Tsarist regime did not and perhaps could not implement a fully ethnic organization of society. The regime remained one based primarily on a legally defined estate hierarchy, and ethnic categories mattered more to political elites who could participate in Imperial institutions than to most of the Tsar's subjects. The Tsarist regime surely differed from the Soviet regime. I argue, however, that differences between the two regimes lay in *how* they used ethnic concepts to organize their polities, not *whether* they did. Neither the Tsarist nor the Soviet regime called itself a nation-state, but both participated in the process of making ethnic difference significant, as described by Verdery. Ethnic distinctions could grow in the Tsar's Empire and become particularly powerful in the Soviet Union because the two regimes' 'myths of homogeneity' did not center on ethnicity. In late Imperial Russia, a type of enlightened civic inclusion and religion competed with ethnicity as bases for integration, and class prevailed in the Soviet Union. The development of ethnic categories thus supported the integration of the body politic on non-ethnic bases. The Tsarist regime provided concepts and important precedents for the ethnic organization of educational, spiritual, and political institutions. With the destruction of the Tsarist regime and its estate order, the new Soviet regime systematized the language of ethnicity and built upon the foundations laid by its predecessor.

Notes

1 Yuri Slezkine, 'Naturalists Versus Nations: Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity', *Representations* v. 47 (Summer 1994), pp. 170–95.

2 Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edn (1989). Kristen McClure's article 'Difference, Diversity and the Limits of Toleration' suggested the use of this definition, though she uses it in a different context. *Political Theory* v. 18, no. 3 (August 1990), pp. 372–3.

3 For a study of the emergence of nationality as a 'politically salient category' focusing on educational policy and the concept of '*inorodtsy*' in late Imperial Russia, see John W. Slocum, 'The Boundaries of National Identity: Religion, Language, and Nationality Politics in Late Imperial Russia' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, March 1993). Paul Werth analyzes the creation of an 'ethno-religious identity' in the late Imperial period in 'Baptized Tatars at the Crossroads: Orthodox Mission and the Transformation of Ethno-Religious Identity in Russia's Eastern Provinces' (unpublished paper, 1996). Daniel Brower describes how Tsarist administrators in Turkestan developed ethnic categories in 'Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan', in Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds, *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington, 1997), pp. 114–35.

4 By using the terms 'regime' and 'polity' I seek to avoid the opposition often implied by the terms 'state' and 'society'. The study of administration in one region illustrates the ambiguities involved in the latter terms, and the extent to which personnel and political attitudes present in 'state' institutions penetrated 'society' and vice versa. For a discussion of local administration and society, see Chapter Six of my PhD dissertation, 'Local Politics of Empire: State, Religion and Ethnicity in Bashkiria, 1865–1917' (Columbia University, 1999). Bashkiria was the term used in late Imperial Russia for the lands of the Bashkirs. Ufa province, including parts of the southern Ural mountains and the area to their west, lay at the core of what was known as Bashkiria. Bashkiria included parts of Orenburg, Samara, and Perm provinces as well.

5 Slezkine has noted the great extent to which scholars in the West and the former Soviet Union shared assumptions on the importance of the nation. 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State

Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review* v. 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 414–15.

6 For work on the Empire as a whole, see, for example, Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923* (Cambridge, 1954), revised edition, 1964. For accounts of individual nationalities, see, for example, the Stanford University Press series entitled 'Studies of nationalities in the USSR'. Regarding the Volga–Ural region in particular, see Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: a Profile in National Resilience* (Stanford, 1986); Alton S. Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria, 1552–1740: a Case Study of Imperialism* (New Haven, 1968); Tamurbek Davletshin, *Sovetskii Tatarstan: Teoriia i praktika leninskoi natsional'noi politiki* (London, 1974). For a similar Soviet interpretation of Tatar national formation which subordinates national ideals to those of class, see Rafik I. Nafigov, *Formirovanie i razvitie peredovoi Tatarskoi obshchestvenno-politicheskoi mysli (1895–1917)* (Kazan', 1964).

7 For the literature on Russification, see Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801–1917* (Oxford, 1967) and *Nations and States: an Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder, 1977); Edward Thaden, ed., *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914* (Princeton, 1981). Benedict Anderson's argument regarding Russification draws primarily on the work of Seton-Watson (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), revised edition, 1991, pp. 85–6). Marc Raeff suggests the importance of Russification in 'Patterns of Russian Imperial Policy toward the Nationalities', in Edward Allworth, ed., *Soviet Nationality Problems* (New York, 1971), pp. 22–42.

8 Hans Rogger, 'Nationalism and the State: A Russian Dilemma', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v. 4 (1961), pp. 253–64; Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvoelkerreich, Enstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich, 1992); Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb, IL, 1996); S. Frederick Starr, 'Tsarist Government: the Imperial Dimension', in Jeremy Azrael, ed., *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices* (New York, 1978), pp. 3–38.

9 Suny suggests that 'after 1881, the ruling nationality increasingly conceived of social problems in ethnic terms', and Slezkine mentions Nikolai Il'minskii's emphasis on native language instruction as analogous to Lenin's approach to the national question. Ronald Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, 1993), p. 27; Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment', p. 418.

10 Slezkine, 'The USSR as Communal Apartment', pp. 426–7; Rogers Brubaker, 'Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: an Institutionalist Account', *Theory and Society* v. 23 (1994), p. 74, note 12.

11 According to Suny, as 'state oppression' endangered ethnic formations, it eroded 'internal distinctions of members of the targeted ethnic group'. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, pp. 21, 27.

12 Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston, 1969), pp. 9–10,

13–14; and 'Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity', in Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, eds, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 13; and Katherine Verdery, 'Ethnicity, Nationalism, and State-Making', in Vermeulen and Govers, eds, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity,* p. 44.

13 Ibid., pp. 45, 50. See also Brackette Williams, 'A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain', *Annual Review of Anthropology* v. 18 (1989), pp. 401–44.

14 Alain de Benoist, 'The Idea of Empire', *Telos,* nos. 98–9 (1993–4), pp. 84–8.

15 Historians of France have made similar arguments for situating the post-revolutionary social order within the ideological and political developments of the Old Regime. Some examples include Keith Michael Baker, 'Introduction', 'On the Problem of the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution', and 'Representation Redefined' in *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 1–27, 224–51; Peter Sahlins, 'Fictions of a Catholic France: The Naturalization of Foreigners, 1685–1787', *Representations* v. 47 (Summer 1994), pp. 85–110. Alexis de Tocqueville provided the first and most prominent elaboration of this thesis in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution,* Stuart Gilbert, trans. (New York, 1955). I thank Peter Holquist for suggesting this analogy.

16 Suny has written: 'The peculiarities of Russian imperialism . . . had a highly differentiated influence on the development of nationalities within the empire. Different forms of rule and uneven effects of socioeconomic transformations in Russia in the decades following the Emancipation of 1861 placed the various peoples of the empire in distinct historical contexts.' Suny, *The Revenge of the Past,* p. 23.

17 Slezkine thoroughly addresses the question of what a nation was in the eighteenth century in his article 'Naturalists Versus Nations', and concepts of ethnic origins used by ethnographers in the late Imperial and early Soviet period in 'N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics', *Slavic Review* v. 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996), pp. 826–62. Otherwise, the concept of *narodnost'* in the pre-reform period and especially the reign of Nicholas I has received by far the greatest amount of attention. See Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley, 1959), and Peter Christoff, *The Third Heart: Some Intellectual-Ideological Cross-currents in Russia, 1800–1830* (The Hague, 1970); Nathaniel Knight, 'Constructing the Science of Nationality: Ethnography in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1995); Paul Werth, 'Subjects for Empire: Orthodox Mission and Imperial Governance in the Volga–Kama Region, 1825–1881' (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996), pp. 145–68; Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism* (Cambridge, MA, 1961); Cynthia Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: an Intellectual Biography of Count Sergei Uvarov, 1786–1855* (DeKalb, IL, 1984), pp. 103–10.

18 Slocum writes, '[a]s long as the word "nationality" itself was unavailable to political entrepreneurs, so was the framing of political demands on

the basis of a nationality principle.' Slocum himself focuses on the term '*inorodtsy*' rather than the terms *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*. Slocum, 'Boundaries of National Identity', pp. 150–207.

19 Slocum's work on the concept of *inorodtsy* represents a major exception. John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *Russian Review*, v. 57 (April 1998), pp. 173–90.

20 The Bashkirs, as a legally defined estate group, were given *votchinnik* rights to their land, that is, ownership with restrictions on selling their property. Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv Respubliki Bashkortostan (TsGIA RB), f. I-11, op. 1, d. 899, l. 4.

21 *Vestnik Ufimskogo zemstva*, god 1, vyp. 5 (1879), pp. 44–52. According to law, 'Bashkir' was an estate category, but 'Russian' and 'Tatar' were not.

22 For example, the legal status of Muslim clergy was different from that of Orthodox clergy and Muslim representation was restricted in city dumas.

23 In Ufa's one-day census of 1886, religious confession was the primary identity ascribed. The 1883 guidebook for Ufa listed officials by estate and religious confession. N. A. Gurvich, compiler, *Gorod Ufa k trekhletnemu ego iubeleiu* (Ufa, 1887), pp. 9–10; Ufimskii Gubernskii Statisticheskii Komitet, *Spravochnaia knizhka Ufimskoi guberii* (Ufa, 1883).

24 The term was also used to describe a type of livestock. Although Dal' mentions language as a determinant of *plemia*, this does not come through strongly in the documents from Bashkiria. Vladimir Dal', *Tolkovyi Slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo iazika*, 2nd edn, v. 2 (St Petersburg, 1881), pp. 310–11.

25 Gurvich, comp., *Gorod Ufa*, pp. 9–15.

26 In 1881, Dal' defined it as 'native of another, alien tribe [*chuzhoi plemia*] or people [*narod*]'. Dal', v. 2, p. 46.

27 Slocum notes the 'slippage' of informal cultural definitions into official usage. Slocum, 'Who, and When', p. 185.

28 According to Slocum, those who spoke a non-Russian language were considered 'aliens' even if they were as culturally developed as Russians, such as Baltic Germans and Poles. Slocum, 'Who, and When', pp. 29–39. In Bashkiria, the term 'alien' was only applied to Muslims and pagans.

29 I found two mentions of the word *natsional'nost'* before 1890, both by religious figures. The mufti, the Muslim spiritual leader in Ufa, wrote of *natsional'nost'* in 1876 and Bishop Nikanor used the word in 1882 in correspondence with Konstantin Pobedonostsev. TsGIA RB f. I-11, op. 1, d. 1076, ll. 251–25ob, and 'Iz zapisok arkhiepiskopa Nikanora. Apologiia. Pis'mo k ober-prokuroru Sv. Sinoda K. P. Pobedonostsevu', *Russkii arkhiv*, v. 47, no. 5 (1909), p. 48.

30 'Pianstvo u musul'man', *Ufimskii vestnik* 217 (5 October 1906), p. 3.

31 Since by this time states were territorial, the two definitions meant essentially the same thing. Dal', v. 2, p. 461. Authors such as Vladimir Gessen and V. Vodovozov later would promote the political definition as *the* definition of *narod*. See Vladimir Gessen, 'Narod I natsiia', *Obrazovanie* v. 4 (April 1898), pp. 59–75; v. 5–6 (May–June 1898), pp. 59–72; and 'Narod', *Novyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, v. 28 (Petrograd, 1916), pp. 950–8; V. Vodovozov, 'Natsiia', *Novyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, v. 28 (Petrograd, 1916), pp. 119–22.

32 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA), f. 821, op. 8, d. 825, ll. 16 l I ob.

33 Dal' defined *narodnost'* as 'the sum total of characteristics and way of life which differentiates one *narod* from others'. Dal', v. II, p. 462.

34 Guido Zernatto, 'Nation: the History of a Word', *The Review of Politics*, v. 6, no. 3 (July 1944), p. 352. Liah Greenfeld cites Zernatto when describing the transformations of the word 'nation' and the confusion they introduce into theories of nationalism. *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 4–12. See also de Benoist, p. 83; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 16.

35 Dal' gives *narod* as a synonym for *natsiia*, and *narodnost'* as a synonym for *natsional'nost'*. V. Vodovozov agreed that the two pairs were used 'almost' as synonyms in Russian speech, the primary difference being that *natsiia* was only appropriate to 'more substantial' peoples. Vodovozov, 'Natsiia', pp. 119–22. However, a report on the *'etnografiia'* of part of the province prepared by the local administration indicated all peoples from Russian to the *votiak* could be *natsii*. TsGIA RB f. I-11, op. 1, d. 1128, l. 88.

36 *Sbornik zhurnalov Ufimskogo Gubernskogo zemskogo sobraniia, XXXVII Och. Sessii, 1911* (Ufa, 1912), pp. 534–8.

37 *Zhurnaly Belebeiskogo zemskogo sobraniia, 38-go ocherednoi sessii, 1912 goda* (Ufa, 1913), p. 396.

38 Gumer Teregulov, 'O soveremennom polozheniia nachal'nogo obrazovaniia inorodtsev', *Biulleten otdela narodnogo obrazovaniia*, no. 2 (1 July 1916), p. 79.

39 TsGIA RB f. 187, op. 1, d. 11 (1896), l. 196; d. 84 (1904), l. 5.

40 Ibid., op. 1, ed. khr. 1272. ll. 17–17aob.

41 'Sostav naseleniia Ufimskoi gubernii po perepisi 1897', *Ufimskii vestnik*, no. 158 (21 July 1906), p. 2.

42 *Ufimskii Gubernskii Vestnik*, prilozhenie k no. 60 (1 August 1912); prilozhenie k no. 61 (4 August 1912). Classifications were not consistent among different counties. Islam's adherents were listed as Muslim in Belebei county, as Bashkirs in Birsk county, and as Tatars in Menzelinsk county.

43 M. I. Rodnov and O. I. Dudina, 'Krest'ianstvo ufimskoi gubernii v 1917 godu: Belebeevskii uezd', in Mikhail I. Rodnov, ed., *Bashkirskii krai*, vyp. 1 (Ufa, 1991), pp. 74–7.

44 Anderson finds the 'immediate genealogy' of 'official nationalism' in the colonial state's 'census, map, and museum'. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 63–9. Without denying their importance, I analyze governmental practices which, I argue, not only gave 'real social life to the state's earlier fantasies' of an ethnically defined population, but helped generate the 'fantasy' in the first place.

45 *Vsepoddanneishii otchet Ufimskogo gubernatora za 1895 goda.*

46 *Gosudarstvennaia izmena* (St Petersburg, 1906).

47 Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Obshchestvennykh Ob"edinenii Respubliki Bashkortostan (Ufa), f. 183, op. 4, d. 76, ll. 1–2.

48 RGIA f. 1288, op. 2, 1909 razdel, delo 25b, pp. 3ob, 71, 8ob–10l, 20–5, 27–8, 29.

49 Khamza Fatykovich Usmanov, *Razvitie kapitalizma v sel'skom khoziaistve Bashkirii v poreformennyi period* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 72–3.

50 Ibid., p. 61.

51 TsGIA RB, f. I–11, op. 1, ed. khr. 1272. ll. 17–17aob.

52 *Vsepoddanneishii raport ego Imperatorskomu Velichestvu Ufimskogo Gubernatora Bogdanovicha 1899*, p. 2; Usmanov, *Razvitie*, pp. 61–2.

53 For a discussion of the First World War's impact on ethnicity in the Empire, see Mark L. von Hagen, 'The Great War and the Mobilization of Ethnicity in the Russian Empire', in Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder, eds, *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building* (New York, 1998), pp. 34–57.

54 *Ufimskii vestnik*, no. 24 (30 January 1914), p. 4; Ibid., no. 25 (31 January), p. 3; *Adres-kalendar' Ufimskoi gubernii i Spravochnaia knizhka na 1910 god* (Ufa, 1910).

55 TsGIA RB, I–9, d. 1374, l. 521.

56 Isabelle Kreindler, 'Educational Policies toward the Eastern Nationalities in Tsarist Russia: a Study of Il'minskii's System' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1969), pp. 75–6.

57 Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respublica Tatarstan, f. 10, op. 1, d. 5964, l. 20ob, cited in Werth, 'Baptized Tatars at the Crossroads', p. 12.

58 Literature on Il'minskii includes Kreindler, 'Educational Policies', and 'A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy', *Slavic Review* v. 36, no. 1 (March 1977), pp. 86–100; Stephen Blank, 'National Education, Church and State in Tsarist Nationality Policy: the Il'minskii System', *Canadian American Slavic Studies* v. 17, no. 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 466–86; Wayne Dowler, 'The Politics of Language in Non-Russian Elementary Schools in the Eastern Empire, 1865–1914', *Russian Review*, v. 54 (October 1995), pp. 527–33; Robert P. Geraci, 'Window on the East: Ethnography, Orthodoxy, and Russian Nationality in Kazan, 1870–1914' (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1995); Werth, 'Subjects for Empire'. On central state policy see Slocum, 'Boundaries of National Identity', pp. 207–56.

59 I thank Peter Holquist for suggesting this term.

60 *Plan deiatel'nosti Ufimskogo Gubernskogo Zemstva po narodnomu obrazovaniiu utverzhdennyi gubernskim zemskim sobraniem ocherednoi sessii 1912.* 2nd edn (Ufa, 1913), pp. I–II.

61 *Ufimskii vestnik* no. 125 (1914), p. 4.

5

What's so Revolutionary about the Russian Revolution? State Practices and the New-Style Politics, 1914–21

Peter Holquist

> The era of tyrannies dates from August 1914, that is, from the time when the belligerent nations turned to a system which can be defined as follows: (a) in the economic sphere, greatly extended state control of all means of production, distribution and exchange . . . (b) in the intellectual sphere, state control of thought, in two forms: one negative, through a suppression of all opinion deemed unfavorable to the national interest; the other positive, through what we shall call the organization of enthusiasm.
>
> Elie Halévy, *Age of Tyrannies*

> The world war formally ended with the conclusion of the armistice. . . . In fact, however, all that we have experienced and are experiencing from that time is a continuation and transformation of the world war.
>
> Peter Struve, November 1919[1]

How should one write the history of the Russian Revolution after the fall of Communism?[2] The nature of the Russian Revolution had for decades been one of the major points of dispute between totalitarians and social historians. But the collapse of the system founded by the October Revolution permits historians to view the entire period from a new perspective, both because the need to debate October in terms of the Soviet regime's legitimacy has now passed and because that regime's collapse has finally permitted historians free access to documents of the period. In this new environment, the question of the Revolution's essence – continuity or change? popular revolution or coup? – is located in a radically reconfigured historiographical landscape.

Archival access has contributed to the rethinking of the Russian Revolution. But new material on its own generates no new paradigms. As usual, the new approach in the Russian field is deeply indebted to current trends in Western European historiography. Whereas the Western European literature on the working class had earlier served as a model for studies of Russian history, works on the French Revolution now play that same role. In the Russian field, François Furet has superseded E. P. Thompson.[3] Both totalitarians and revisionists had debated the Russian Revolution in terms of the regime's legitimacy (or lack thereof) and did so largely in terms of its degree of popular support (or, again, its lack thereof). An emerging orthodoxy, however, emphasizes the political and ideological foundations of the Soviet system.[4]

Ideology and political practices

The return of the political holds out the opportunity to 'reconceptualize "power" in the revolutionary period' and to analyze 'the relation between the "social" and the "political"'.[5] What 1917 witnessed was not simply a quantitative increase in the amount of traditional politics but a qualitative transformation in the definition and scope of politics. The year 1917 marked the introduction of a new political ecosystem and the concomitant rise of a new style of politics.[6] This new-style politics operated with certain newly emerging state practices, and especially with practices emerging in the course of the First World War. Politics came to incorporate certain working assumptions and categories that were implicit in these state practices. The Russian Revolution thus marks a tectonic shift in the nature and scope of politics, a shift covering both the emergence of a modern political ecosystem (including the rise of ideologies) and the use of modern state practices, which shaped and were in turn shaped by the particular ideologies that deployed them.

To be sure, people had conceived of politics in a modern way before 1917, especially after 1905. As in the French *ancien régime*, the concept of the new-style politics had emerged before the Revolution itself but the monarchy blocked their full actualization.[7] Unlike other European dynastic heads, the Russian Tsar stubbornly opposed incorporating modern political practices into the Imperial order, even after the concessions of 1905.[8]

Correspondingly, 1917 witnessed not simply a quantitative increase in the amount of traditional politics but a qualitative transformation in its definition and scope. In the Revolution, Russians across the political spectrum embraced the Enlightenment's application of scientific rationality to society and implemented forms of political mobilization forged over the course of the nineteenth century (for example, mass parties, the popular press).[9] In the course of 1917, these new forms of political mobilization extended far beyond the actions of specific political parties and any particular social class. Rather than replicating the claims of this or that political movement on behalf of its preferred social constituency, we might instead note the universal tendency to practice a form of politics predicated on the social theory of representation and justifying itself by reference to popular sovereignty; what one might call, after Lenin, 'politics of a new type' (*politika novogo tipa*).[10]

Whatever their party or ideological affiliation, all political movements in the post-February 1917 period engaged in a form of revolutionary politics. The Russian Revolution was a 'social revolution' not just because social groups participated in it or because the social order was changed, but because all political actors sought to employ politics as a tool to transform society.[11] And revolutionary politics was to be the tool for realizing these dreams.[12] Thus the fault line of this period then lies not only between the different ideologies during the Revolution, but equally between a pre-revolutionary structure of politics and a revolutionary form of politics, one in which all sides put forth ideologies and engaged in mass politics.

So people across the political divide shared in the belief that revolutionary politics were the transformatory tool in a project to renew society and each individual. But that people 'believed in the absolute efficacy of politics, invested it with the dual task of refounding the body social and regenerating the individual, does not oblige us to share in their illusion'.[13] To accomplish these ends, revolutionary politics deployed state practices that were emerging out of Russia's total war experience, such as economic management and surveillance. Such political practices were not the product of any particular ideology or discursive system. They pre-dated the new revolutionary ecosystem, but could now be deployed, massively and without constraint, to accomplish new revolutionary ends. Alexis de Tocqueville's observations on the French Revolution are equally valid for the Russian Revolution: 'A great many of the practices we associate with the Revolution had precedents in the treatment of the people by the government in the last two centuries of the monarchy. The old régime provided the Revolution with many of its methods; all the Revolution added was a savagery peculiar to itself.'[14] In the Russian case, however, the Revolution drew not only on practices of the old regime, but on practices of an old regime moving, haltingly, toward a total war regime.[15]

Here is why it is imperative to distinguish between the revolutionaries' own belief in the novelty of their approach – a cardinal feature of 1917 – and their appropriation of existing tools and of the conceptual presuppositions which undergirded them.[16] Revolutionary politics consciously and unconsciously incorporated certain working assumptions and categories that were implicit in these state practices. Instead of treating 1917 in isolation, it is instructive to situate 1917 as a fulcrum in Russia's 'deluge' experience of 1914–21. Such a chronology not only addresses the relationship between the Revolution and the Civil War, but also the much overlooked question of the relationship between the total war mobilization in the course of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. The Revolution wove together a magical belief in the ability of politics to remake the world with an ethos of violence emerging out of the First World War.[17] Nor can the Russian Revolution be so neatly disentangled from the ensuing Civil War and subsequent developments. Many practices that had emerged in the course of total mobilization were carried across the revolutionary divide for use by competing movements in the Civil War. Moreover, the Civil War was in fact a struggle over how the Revolution should be interpreted and implemented, a contest over which vision of revolution was to be institutionalized.

A comparative analysis of competing movements in the Civil War demonstrates that what made the Russian Revolution revolutionary cannot be located narrowly in 1917 or in the practices of specific parties or social constituencies. This is not to say, of course, that the Bolshevik regime was not distinct in its ideology or in how it deployed certain practices. But what set the Soviet regime apart was not 'ideology' in a generic sense, or its reliance on a specific practice (for example, surveillance, punitive detachments, economic management), but in how and to what ends it employed practices that were common to the new-model politics. The Bolshevik Revolution, in short, was distinguished by the confluence of two features: the implementation of a *particular* ideology (Leninist socialism) within the more general and simultaneous implementation of a particularly *modern style* of politics (put succinctly, a style that views populations as both the means and ends of some emancipatory project). While Bolshevism sanctioned wide-scale social engineering and terror to a greater degree than its competitors, Bolshevism itself cannot account for all attempts to manage and sculpt the population in new ways. In this sense, Soviet power represented only the most forceful and successful implementation of the new view of politics.[18]

This chapter tests this proposition by comparing practices of governance of the Soviet regime and its competitors in two fields: surveillance and food supply. The case of surveillance shows that many practices reflexively ascribed to 'Bolshevism' in fact are indebted at least as much to the more general implementation of certain political practices, practices which extended beyond the ideological divide of Red and White. The field of food supply shows how Bolshevik ideology accounted for significant differences in how such common practices were employed.

Surveillance as a mode of power

While surveillance is often used to mean the techniques for keeping subjects under observation, this chapter will use it in a broader sense, as the ethos of governance informing the deployment of these techniques; what Keith Baker has termed a 'mode of power'.[19] Surveillance was information-gathering of a particular type, information-gathering for the purpose of observing and then shaping the population's attitudes. Such techniques of surveillance – and the conception of governance informing them – have been traditionally identified with the Bolsheviks. Yet these techniques emerged under the Russian Imperial state in its total war manifestation and during the Civil War were employed by the Bolsheviks' opponents as well as by the Soviet state.

Scholars have not anachronistically invented the category of surveillance. Contemporaries, by the very terms they used, distinguished information collected for policing and intelligence purposes from surveillance. Whereas policing aimed at reporting on delinquents, malcontents and revolutionaries as individuals in order to uphold an existing order, surveillance sought information on the whole population to amass aggregate data on attitudes in order better to act upon them. Policing was a concern of public order, whereas surveillance sought instead the knowledge to foster the full potential of the citizen and society. Surveillance was thus part of a larger shift in how power was conceived, a shift from a territorial concept to a governmental one. An administrative, territorial state sought to rule territory, whereas governmental states sought to manage populations. To foster the condition of this new focus of legitimacy, states needed to know at what level popular attitudes already stood – hence surveillance. And to address this new conception of ruling, states employed two techniques: the perlustration of their citizens' mail and the construction of bureaucracies charged with tracing the popular mood.

Of course, it is not difficult to show the Soviet concern for surveillance. Tellingly, the first Soviet institution to engage in surveillance on a massive scale was the Red Army, but this concern soon became suffused throughout virtually the entire Soviet apparatus.[20] The near-ubiquitous 'summaries on the mood of the population' (*svodki o nastroenii naseleniia*) represent the classic artifact of this concern. From early autumn 1918 onward, political departments in the Red Army compiled regular summaries on the mood of the troops as well as of the civilian population.[21] These summaries, and the laconic standardized categories drawn up to typify the population's moods, rapidly became a veritable genre in their own right. The Cheka not only demanded regular summaries of popular moods, but also sternly admonished its officials not just to describe but 'to indicate what *explains*' these attitudes.[22] In the aftermath of the Civil War, responsibility for perlustration of letters passed from military postal boards to Cheka and OGPU information departments. As the 1920s progressed, the regime continued to scrutinize letters passing through the mail, making ever more extensive extracts and ever more detailed summaries. Likewise, Soviet organs continued, surreptitiously and assiduously, to track popular moods.[23] Surveillance had become one of the essential modes of Soviet power.

Yet the Bolsheviks had not invented the concept of surveillance. Surveillance, both as a technique and a mode of power, had begun to assume institutional form in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution and expanded massively in the course of the Great War. Prior to 1914, Russian officials had begun to conceive of surveillance as a project and they had even taken some tentative steps to realize these aspirations. But it was during the First World War that these embryonic plans for social management became translated into regular administrative practice, through the two-pronged approach of perlustration of the mails and the regularized, bureaucratic reporting on public moods.[24] On the day war was declared, the Imperial regime enacted a 'temporary statute on military censorship', which extended to the entire Empire in either total or partial force.[25] Total implementation was introduced in areas of the front and entailed the interception of all correspondence. Partial implementation, covering the rest of the Empire, encompassed all letters from the armed forces, all letters directed to newspapers and to non-permanent addresses such as post office boxes, as well as all outgoing letters of enemy POWs held in Russia and incoming letters from Russian POWs in captivity. In addition, partial censorship mandated the interception of correspondence of individual suspects and, soon afterwards, the correspondence of entire groups deemed to be potentially unreliable, such as Jews, Balts, Germans, and Poles, nearly one million of whom had been deported from the western regions and resettled in interior provinces. Beginning in April 1915, the Interior Ministry required military censorship departments to compose monthly summaries specifically on the attitude of Jews to military service, the Russian Army and the enemy.[26]

The task of military censorship was not just to control content but to describe and, so far as possible, explain popular attitudes. From the end of 1915, censors were instructed not only to focus on issues of military security but also to turn their attention to questions of a general political nature.[27] On the basis of the tens of thousands of letters they had reviewed each week, military censors compiled weekly summaries of the mail's overall content, with representative passages from particular letters and a statistical breakdown of the week's mail. The Viatka military censorship office, for instance, processed nearly 52 000 letters for one week in May 1915; on the basis of this material, the censors determined that 4 per cent of the letters reflected a rise in morale; 18 per cent expressed a desire for a quick end to the war; 0.5 per cent contained complaints; and 77 per cent reflected a calm attitude to their state of affairs. A total of 224 letters were detained.[28] People were of course aware that the authorities had a newfound interest in their letters. Some soldiers tried to avoid the censor by using the civilian post, while others addressed the censors directly in their letters or complained in their correspondence about the interception of their letters.[29] Thus surveillance had begun to shape how people thought they could express themselves while at the same time suggesting to them that their views – whatever they might be – were of significance.

And it was also during the course of the war that the government established a system of routine and regular reporting on the population's mood. From March 1915 the Department of Police began to require not only the usual reports on specific events but also regular monthly reports on the activities of revolutionary parties and the opposition movement.[30] Still, surveillance was limited to the negative function of policing. But in October 1915 – 13 months into a war rapidly becoming total – the Interior Minister ordered provincial and district officials to begin compiling regular monthly reports on the population's 'moods' and issued a standardized set of questions to be addressed. The army too began to compile its own regular 'summaries on the mood' of its own soldiers as well as of the population in general (again, with particular attention to the Jews).[31]

Nor were state officials the only ones seeking to identify popular sentiment. In Russia, as in other European powers, professional organizations and the educated public rushed to aid in mobilizing society under the aegis of the total war state. Zemstvo circles circulated their own questionnaires for determining 'how the war has affected the mood of the population'. The information gathered from the questionnaires was then used to determine how 'village consciousness is apprehending the war' and what the countryside's 'dominant moods' were.[32] The purpose of this zemstvo project, just like that of the Interior Ministry, was not just to gather information but to use this information to determine the most appropriate measures for maximizing the village's resources – economic, physical and psychic – for the war effort. To this same end, the semi-official Skobelev Committee produced patriotic postcards, newsreels and films.[33] In Petrograd, another committee placed receptacles throughout the city for used newspapers, which were then shipped to the front to be read second-hand, thus assuring informed – and hence dedicated – citizen-soldiers and forging an 'unbreakable link between the army and the people'.[34] While reading huts (*izba-chital'na*) are often presented as a classically Bolshevik endeavor, they too arose during the Great War. Under the leadership of P. N. Grigor'ev, an educational activist, the Ufa zemstvo established the first province-wide network of them in 1915.[35] Observers during the war noted how Russian war posters, based on

British examples presented at traveling public exhibitions, came to serve 'the interests of state and society' as an 'agitator and organizer of the masses'.[36]

Throughout Europe, as in Russia, states came to rely on surveillance to know and influence a newly conceived resource, the national psyche. By 1918, both Britain and France were engaged in the massive perlustration of their own mails and had constructed administrative networks for reporting on public morale.[37] The United States Army, which at this time was instituting the mass use of intelligence testing for its own recruits, also had a 'psychological subsection' to trace the ebb and flow of enemy civilian and military morale.[38] Germany's techniques of surveillance during the war are of particular interest, since the Soviet state subsequently showed particular interest in the lessons Germany drew from this experience. Like all other belligerents, Germany instituted the systematic perlustration of the mail. From 1915, the War Ministry ordered commanders in military districts throughout Germany to report on the general situation in their districts, and soon afterwards clarified that commanders were to report first and foremost on the mood of the civilian population. The German command – and particularly Ludendorff – hoped to use this information to identify the proper forms of state-sponsored 'enlightenment activity' (*Aufklärungstatigskeit*). The state required such enlightenment measures, Ludendorff later explained, to secure the 'psychical unity of the people' demanded by 'totalitarian war' (*der totale Krieg*).[39] This goal explains his desire to consolidate the German film industry into the conglomerate UFA, so as better to coordinate film propaganda. Soviet works throughout the 1920s and early 1930s frequently invoked Ludendorff's writings and those of other German authors as to the efficacy of state measures for 'working on public opinion'.[40]

Given the massive expansion of surveillance in the course of the Great War, it should then come as no surprise that revolutionary authorities reflexively resorted to it for their own ends. Immediately after the February Revolution, the Provisional Government established a department for contact with the provinces, which organized 'cultural-enlightenment cells' throughout the country and set up courses for training cadres of government propagandists.[41] From April 1917 the Interior Ministry began to compile regular overviews 'on significant events, disorders and the general state of the localities'. These overviews collated data from regular reports that local authorities were required to submit to the Interior Ministry, according to specific forms.[42] A 'central committee for socio-political enlightenment', founded in June 1917 with financing from the political administration of the War Ministry, informed the population of state goals by dispatching speakers, holding lectures and conducting courses on 'political literacy'. It also compiled weekly maps of European Russia, color-coded to reflect the population's degree of support for the government.[43] And in July the Provisional Government issued revised instructions on the censorship of the press and mails, based on the 1914 temporary statute.[44]

The practice of surveillance confirms William Rosenberg's observation that the post-October period 'represented essentially a radical extension, rather than revolutionary break, with the past'.[45] Soviets and their opponents carried surveillance techniques over into their own civil war. Virtually all anti-Soviet movements employed surveillance techniques, often establishing surveillance institutions prior to their Soviet counterparts. White governments, through organs usually termed 'information departments' (*osvedomitel'nyi otdel*), compiled regular summaries on the population's mood. These summaries were based upon information gathered from agents traveling undercover throughout White regions and an extensive network of local offices.[46] These anti-Bolshevik summaries bore a striking resemblance to their Soviet analogues. Due in part to their common appropriation of the practice of surveillance, White and Red alike shared many of the same conceptual categories, categories implicit in surveillance as a project. Both identified the 'population' as the object of governance and demonstrated a burning concern about its 'political mood'. While White and Red surveillance technocrats differed over the precise prism to be applied, they all sought to disaggregate the population into a hierarchy of distinct 'elements', based upon their putative political reliability. And they even shared a common morphology of political movements, predicated upon the social theory of representation. Thus both White and Red alike excoriated 'speculators' and sought to rally the population's 'more conscious elements'.[47]

The task of surveillance, however, was not limited to gathering data *on* the population. It equally encompassed attempts to engage the population politically, to transform their existing moods to the proper level of consciousness through state-sponsored enlightenment measures. Invoking the latest branch of the human sciences, anti-Soviet surveillance technocrats described their task as 'the psychological consolidation of occupied territories'.[48] General Denikin's anti-Soviet information agency was in fact titled 'the information-agitational department' (*osvedomitel'no-agitatsionnyi otdel*), abbreviated as 'OSVAG'. OSVAG defined its task as 'divided into two components: information "upwards" (to the authorities) and information "downwards" (to the population)'.[49] Censorship's goal was not so much to deny the population information as to ensure that citizens received the information required for their enlightenment.[50] This ethos underlay the attempts by all governments in the 1914–21 period to outlaw as 'rumors' any information that conflicted with the official version.[51] And to communicate the proper information to the population, the Whites engaged in many of the same 'cultural-enlightenment measures' practiced by the Soviet side. To propagate their political message – *de rigueur* in the new-style politics predicated on popular sovereignty and an enlightenment project – the Whites relied on measures traditionally identified solely with the Bolsheviks: reading huts equipped with newspapers and pamphlets (published, of course, by the information departments), agitational trains (*agit-poezda*) and agitational steamships, official journals and newspapers and even the use of agitational plays and films.[52] Not only did Red and White employ agitational posters and placards extensively, but there were striking similarities in their style and content.[53] In the last stages of the Civil War, White military officers counseled Wrangel that 'one must triumph over the Bolsheviks not through force of arms but ideologically [*ideino*]', a point Wrangel noted as 'profoundly correct'. To this end, the White Army in the Crimea set up a network of 37 'cultural enlightenment cells', five mobile agitational groups and courses for military agitators.[54]

These last examples clearly demonstrate that the common presentation of the White movement as hopelessly reactionary in contrast to the progressive Soviet state needs serious revision. OSVAG's reliance on agitational film carried over from the efforts of the Skobelev Committee during the First World War and had obvious parallels with UFA, the German film conglomerate formed by Ludendorff the better to coordinate cinematic efforts during the war. Even the methods of OSVAG's day-to-day operation belie the portrayal of the Whites as hidebound reactionaries. Under the influence of an office chief who had spent much time in Germany, the Rostov OSVAG branch introduced the principles of Taylorism into its operation, with employees wearing color-coded badges and semaphore flags above offices indicating whether couriers ('circulators') could enter or not.[55] This system hindered more than helped efficiency and was ignored in those parts of the building further removed from the agency's chief. But this enlistment of the most up-to-date methods of personnel and time management at the micro-level, in an agency itself dedicated to shaping the population's psyche at a macro-level, suggests that the anti-Soviet movements had indeed incorporated many of the unarticulated conceptions of the new-style politics. While victory in the Civil War permitted the Soviet state to pursue surveillance more fully and totally within an explicitly Marxist framework, the practices themselves had been elaborated by the Imperial state in its total war manifestation and constituted a common heritage for all movements in the Civil War.

Food supply

Surveillance graphically demonstrates how movements with contrasting ideologies nevertheless operated with a common 'sheaf of practices' and with the stated and unstated assumptions which underlay them.[56] The practice of food supply suggests that ideology can also both shape practices and determine the ends towards which they are used. If practices shape how ideological movements operate, ideology may also structure the use of practices.

All sides in the Russian Civil War set themselves the task of ensuring the 'proper' distribution of supplies to the population. The Russian political class's activist view on this issue reflected not a traditional, paternalist outlook but rather a shared heritage of economic management from the Great War. As part of the larger agenda of 'mobilizing' or 'organizing' societies for total war, all combatants in the First World War concentrated the collection and distribution of food supplies in the hands of government agencies. It was the Provisional Government, not Soviet power, which established a state monopoly on grain and which formed an entire new ministry devoted to food supply. Both ideas had initially arisen in the course of the war.[57] Contemporaries themselves understood revolutionary food supply measures as an extension of wartime measures.[58] Indeed, nearly every study of the Tsarist regime's food supply policies in the First World War notes their affinity with later Bolshevik policies and concludes that the 1917 Revolution must be situated within a larger 'Time of Troubles' (1914–21).[59] This insight about food supply, however, has rarely been extended to other areas.

The rise of food supply measures in Russia paralleled those in other European states. In almost all belligerents, states increasingly took upon themselves the task of looking after a proper distribution of food supplies.[60] Thus the rise of economic control in the USSR was not solely the result of Bolshevik ideology. It was an extension and expansion of practices introduced, throughout Europe, in the Great War. Russian officials themselves were very aware of other states' attempts at economic control. Leading economists, many of whom later worked for the Soviets, wrote about Germany's seemingly successful measures of economic management.[61] And, in the decade after the Revolution, Soviet officials continued to situate their economic planning measures within the broader context of other European states during the Great War.[62]

Given this background, it perhaps is not surprising that the Whites just as much as the Reds engaged in the planned management of food supply. The head of the Don Government, Ataman Krasnov, declared free trade to be the state policy in food supply in May 1918. This position represented a radical departure not only from Soviet food policy, but also from the practices of the Imperial and Provisional governments, which had operated with fixed prices and a state grain monopoly. Officials in his own food supply apparatus were sharply critical of this departure from what were seen to be 'scientific' and 'rational' planning measures that had been employed for the past several years. Writing several months later, one official in the Don food supply department provided this evaluation in the face of the government's total lack of grain reserves:

> Two factors, continually clashing, predominate and have predominated in our food supply policies: these are free trade and a food supply organization in the government's iron grip. And the state of our food supply management has varied depending on which current has been ascendant. If free trade was still ascendant, I do not claim that we would have long since perished; but if food supply affairs had been concentrated in the hands of a firm state policy we would not now be confronting the situation which we now must confront with bowed heads. It was a fatal mistake to declare free trade in May [1918], when the Bolsheviks were routed and we turned our attention to food supply management, but we did not attend to it and now we must face the consequences. General Krasnov was a proponent of free trade, but in this he was profoundly mistaken and he had to learn his lesson at the expense of the Don Territory.[63]

This official's economic arguments might be contested, but what is very clear is his faith in the principles of state economic management by specialists. When food supply officials announced in September 1918 to the Don legislative assembly that there existed only enough food reserves to cover the next few hours, they proposed as a solution practices familiar to them from the period of the First World War and Provisional Government: they established a powerful food supply department, declared all food supply reserves to be the property of the government and introduced set prices.[64] Kirillov, the head of the new food supply department's grain section, was well acquainted with his task and with the region. During the First World War he had served as a *Khlebarmiia* agent (*upolnomochennyi po zakupke khleba*), delegated by the Ministry of Agriculture to purchase grain for the army in the Don Territory.[65] The statist planning ethos, fostered in the Great War, had become endemic to all movements in the Civil War. Anti-Soviet food supply specialists denounced 'speculation' and decried the market's anarchy just as much as their Bolshevik counterparts. Following yet another First World War precedent, the Don Government passed a law for combating inflation and speculation and established local committees for combating these evils.[66]

Yet the task of food supply was not merely an imperative of state. Concepts such as 'reserves' and 'surplus' are not so much an economic principle as a moral one. A surplus is not some value-free amount but the result of a political contest between 'the ruthlessness of the appropriators and the resistance of the appropriated'.[67] The decision about why and how much effort should be invested in securing grain (and, concomitantly, how much resistance should be offered to protect one's 'own') is essentially the product of a politico-moral judgement. Red and White alike set themselves the task of state management of food supply. But given the politico-moral framework for determining surpluses and the differing constituencies each thought they were serving, Red and White employed the practice of food supply to strikingly different ends. The stark contrast between the Soviet state and the Imperial, Provisional and White governments in the sphere of punitive measures demonstrates how ideology transformed the use of common practices. White and Red cast the problem their practices addressed in radically different ways: to coax grain from the farmer, or to exhort the citizen?

Put crudely, the anti-Soviet Don Government's food supply apparatus viewed the agrarian producer as responsible for performing his task. The Imperial Government in the First World War, the Provisional Government in 1917 and the anti-Soviet Don Government all established obligations for producers to meet. Yet producers were held responsible not for failure to meet these obligations but only for failure to turn over grain they actually had.[68] The Provisional Government established a state monopoly on grain. (In the Civil War, the Don Government replicated this measure as well.) And the Provisional Government, as 1917 progressed, was increasingly inclined to resort to force. In late August, the Minister of Food Supply issued a circular directing the use of armed force for obtaining grain; by October, his replacement called for a shift from persuasion to force. To provide this coercive force, the Interior Minister secured military units from the War Minister.[69] Nevertheless, the Provisional Government resorted to violence only intermittently and, in any case, was interested only in acquiring and distributing existing grain surpluses. It held farmers responsible for concealing grain they actually had, but did not punish them if they simply did not have the grain.

The Imperial, Provisional and Don governments all advanced similar explanations for shortfalls in their food supply targets. The Whites accepted that farmers faced constraints beyond their control and blamed 'droughts', 'seed shortages' and, most commonly, 'labor shortages' for the perennial shortfalls the food supply apparatus confronted. Reports generated by Don Government agencies on the progress of the 1919 harvest repetitively invoke the 'labor shortage' (*nedostatok rabochikh ruk*), a term conspicuously absent in Soviet reporting on the 1920 harvest.[70] The White food supply apparatus sought to redistribute what the existing agrarian mechanism produced: it did not seek to transform the individual agrarian producer.

The object of Soviet practices, in contrast, was not so much the actual shortfall itself as the individual who had failed to meet the target assigned to him. The Soviet regime focused its punitive measures on the individual, rather than on his holdings, as part of a larger attempt to inculcate in him a new sense of his obligations. Proceeding from the assumption that even the fundamental economic and agricultural conditions could be overcome, the Soviets saw themselves as testing people's intent instead of their performance at a given task. Soviet punitive measures in the sphere of food supply reflected this project to engineer the souls of new citizens. From very early on, the Soviet state failed to distinguish between intent and performance, prescribing criminal punishment for those who failed to meet their assigned targets, regardless of whether they actually had the grain or not. A Soviet decree from 14 May 1918 described the failure to meet state obligations as a conscious act, the product of malicious intent, rather than as an unfortunate if unavoidable natural fact. The failure to surrender 'surpluses' testified to the 'stubbornness of greedy kulaks'. (Unlike Imperial, Provisional Government or White legislation, which addressed 'reserves' (*zapasy*) that might or might not exist, the Soviet decree simply posited the existence of 'surpluses' (*izlishki*)). Consequently, since non-fulfillment was an intentional and malicious act, punishment was criminal and directed against the person of the violator, not just the holdings. The 14 May decree portrayed the violator as 'an enemy of the people' who was to be tried for his crimes before a revolutionary court. The Commissariat of Food Supply reiterated soon afterwards that 'any attempt to avoid the grain monopoly or violation of the plans for supplying central power is to be regarded as a serious crime [*prestuplenie*] against the starving population of Soviet Russia'.[71] The Imperial Government in the course of the First World War, the Provisional Government and the All-Great Don Host had all, like the Bolsheviks, instituted food supply regimes to collect and distribute surpluses. But none of them had made failure to meet obligations a crime for which the violator was held personally responsible. One can hardly conceive of the Imperial, Provisional or Don governments making failure to sow or to present a 'surplus' on demand a 'crime' for which an individual was personally answerable. I have come upon no courts-martial in the White zones of individuals who failed to meet their assignments. And in those cases where someone was accused of hiding grain from the state, only his property was seized. In contrast, by 1919 the Soviet state was counseling its officials 'to publicize widely your repressive actions against those who *decline* to turn over grain'.[72] In the eyes of Soviet officials, any shortfall testified not to a shortage of grain but a shortage of will. Rather than believing that the grain was simply not there, the Soviet state instead saw recalcitrant farmers who were *choosing* not to turn over grain surpluses it had decreed were in existence.

Nor would the Soviet regime accept any mitigating explanations – drought, labor shortage, or even the absence of the demanded grain – for failure to turn over state assessments. Soviet policy recognized not a shortage of grain or of labor, only a shortfall in the harvest (*nedosev*). Unlike their counterparts, Soviet food supply administrators showed little concern for the reasons for such a shortage. Thus the Soviet outlook was more voluntaristic in its estimation of an individual's ability to influence agricultural production and profoundly indifferent to whatever limitations he might face. Obstacles, in this view, were therefore not the product of objective constraints but due to the opposition of subjective wills.[73]

And the policies of the Soviet state reflected such beliefs. The regime communicated its voluntaristic expectations to agrarian producers in concrete policies, most notably the grain requisitioning campaigns. During late 1920 and early 1921 the Soviet state dispatched throughout the Don Territory over 8000 men in shock detachments and thousands more soldiers in Red Army field units (6000 to Donets district alone) to secure compliance with the regime's food supply policies.[74] Here was voluntarism at two levels: an expectation that producers could produce surpluses if they truly desired to do so; and faith in the state's own ability to secure such 'surpluses' if the producers themselves would not.

Nor did the regime rely solely on brute force. The employment of force was always framed in legal terms. Soviet officials on the Don assiduously carried out the suggestions of the 1919 decree for widely publicizing actions against those who 'declined to turn over grain'. As they moved throughout the entire Don Territory, shock detachments and food supply brigades were invariably accompanied by assizes (itinerant circuit sessions) of the Don Revolutionary Tribunal. These assizes had been sanctioned by a Sovnarkom directive of 19 November 1920 calling for the 'judicial–executive apparatus to be activated, achieving the continuous functioning of the rev[olutionary] tribunals' assizes'. Within weeks, authorities on the Don constituted and dispatched these assizes of the Don Territorial Revolutionary Tribunal throughout the region.[75] Assizes punished the recalcitrant directly but served equally as a didactic tool – or, in the words of the instructions issued to the assizes by the Don Food Supply Assembly, 'as a means of agitation and repression'.[76] The assizes thus provided a primer in the meaning of Soviet power by framing certain behavior as illegal and providing a justification for state prosecution.[77] The local press broadcast far and wide the intentionally didactic cautionary tale of their activity. Some assizes went so far as to print thousands of broadsheets of their sentences for distribution among the local population.[78]

Through its selective application of state violence and its use of law, the Soviet regime was trying to convey its form of Marxism as ideology to the population. Soviet behavior in the Don Territory was distinct from the equally voluntaristic demands of French *armées revolutionnaires*[79] precisely because it was not some generic implementation of modern politics but an attempt to realize socialism in practice. If the more general modern political cosmology provided a belief in mankind's ability to remake and manage the world and described the political realm as the forum for this project, Marxism as ideology furnished the particular articulation of this world to be realized and the precise goals of political action. What was distinct, then, was not that Soviet Marxism was merely 'ideological' or even 'voluntaristic', but the particular ways in which Marxism explained agency and its failure. When voluntarism failed, Bolshevism explained it as the nefarious plotting of enemies. Because of its particular form of Marxist ideology, in the countryside the regime saw, and acted upon, classes. Its directives focused on, and its courts tried, class enemies. Bolshevism's specificity lay not in some generic 'ideological' essence but in its specifically manichean and adversarial nature.[80]

What made the Russian Revolution so revolutionary? Provisionally, one might point to the intersection of two powerful currents. First, the emergence, over the course of 1914–21, of certain state practices for intervening upon the population. These practices – surveillance, the management of food supply, the employment of state violence as a technique – all had their origins in the period immediately preceding 1917. Thus any study of the Russian Revolution must take account of these practices and the types of intervention they made possible. But this sheaf of practices (Chartier's term) was turned to a new set of ends with the explosive emergence of a new-style politics in 1917. That year saw, for the first time, the massive implementation and practice of a new-style politics, a politics that had come of age in the French Revolution, predicated on a specifically social theory of representation and deriving its legitimacy from the principle of popular sovereignty. State practices emerging out of the First World War were now turned to serve the ends of revolutionary politics. Surveillance not only reported popular moods, but allowed states to inject the proper form of enlightenment into the population. Food supply permitted the just and rational distribution of essential goods to those constituencies defined, by revolutionary politics, as most deserving and most vital.

So the emergence of certain state practices and the rise of the new-style politics, practices and politics extending across the political spectrum, are critical for understanding the Russian Revolution. But the Soviet Union was not merely one particular case of a more generic form of modern politics. Ideology *was* a fundamental aspect of the Soviet regime, not least because the regime itself believed it was implementing the principles of Leninist state socialism.[81] Yet Bolshevism was not solely an ideology, but a specific ideology operating with a particularly modern conception of politics. Scholars do not face a zero-sum proposition: the Soviet regime as the deterministic outcome of Bolshevik ideology *or* simply the assemblage of certain modern state practices. Bolshevism and modern state practices were entirely bound up with one another. Bolshevism shaped the means and ends to which state practices were applied, while such practices delimited the boundaries of state intervention and identified the potential targets. William Sewell's observations for the French Revolution are equally applicable to the Russian one: 'An adequate explanation of the Revolution must admit *both* that class struggles and exigencies of war pushed the Revolution to ever more radical measures, and that the nature of these measures and the way in which struggles and exigencies were interpreted and acted upon were largely determined by the structure of revolutionary ideology.'[82]

Notes

1 Elie Halévy, *Age of Tyrannies* (Garden City, 1965); Petr Struve, 'Razmyshleniia o russkoi revoliutsii', *Russkaia mysl'*, v. 1–2 (1921), p. 6 (text of a 1919 lecture given by Struve in Rostov-on-Don).

2 Steven Smith, 'Writing the History of the Russian Revolution After the Fall of Communism', *Europe–Asia Studies* v. 46 (1994), pp. 563–78.

3 For example, Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1990), ch. 4; Ronald Suny, 'Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917', *Russian Review* v. 53 (1994), pp. 165–82, here pp. 165–6.

4 For example, Suny, 'Revision', pp. 181–2; Smith, 'Writing the History'; Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy* (New York, 1994).

5 Steven Smith, 'The "Social" and the "Political" in the Russian Revolution', *The Historical Journal* v. 38, no. 3 (1995), pp. 733–43. In an earlier article, Stephen Kotkin had suggested that the social categories reflexively employed by historians were political categories that themselves required analysis ('"One Hand Clapping": Russian Workers in 1917', *Labor History* v. 32, no. 4 (1991), pp. 604–20).

6 'Political ecosystem' to suggest both the articulated systems and unarticulated assumptions structuring political practices across the ideological spectrum. The term is Michael David-Fox's (*Revolution of the Mind* (Ithaca, 1997), pp. 190–1). Katerina Clark (*Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural*

Revolution (Cambridge, 1996), pp. ix–x) employs the term 'ecology of revolution'.

7 Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 238–43; William Sewell, 'Ideologies and Social Revolutions', *Journal of Modern History* v. 57, no. 1 (1985), pp. 57–85.

8 Richard Wortman, 'Nikolai II i obraz samoderzhaviia' in *Reformy ili revoliutsiia: Rossiia, 1861–1917* (St Petersburg, 1992); David McDonald, *Foreign Policy and United Government in Russia* (Cambridge, MA, 1992); Frank Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia* (Princeton, 1990).

9 Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 6–9.

10 On the new form of politics, see Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution,* pp. 158, 238–43; Lenin had described the Bolsheviks as 'a new type of party' (*partiia novogo tipa*).

11 Sewell, 'Ideologies and Social Revolutions', p. 77.

12 See, for instance, the comments of the sober Kadet professor V. I. Vernadskii: 'the impossible is becoming possible and the unprecedented is turning into a catastrophe or, perhaps, a new world phenomenon' (*Dnevniki, 1917–1921* (Kiev, 1994), p. 28). For other expressions of faith in the millenarian efficacy of revolutionary politics, see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (New York, 1989) and Maxim Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts* (1918; New Haven, CT, 1995).

13 Roger Chartier, 'The Chimera of Origins' in Jan Goldstein, ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), p. 178. The following treatment owes much to Chartier's analysis.

14 Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (New York, 1983), p. 192; similarly, Baker, *Inventing* and Chartier, 'Intellectual Origins'.

15 See below for studies on food supply making this point; also Dan Orlovsky, 'Professionalism in Ministerial Bureaucracy' in Harvey Balzer, ed., *Russia's Missing Middle Class* (Armonk, NY, 1996), esp. pp. 270–3; Lewis Siegelbaum, *The Politics of Industrial Mobilization in Russia* (New York, 1983).

16 For example, see Lenin's December 1916 comments on the German war economy as a blueprint for how the state can manage society (cited in Malia, *Soviet Tragedy*, p. 81). Yanni Kotsonis's current project on taxation and the meanings assigned to it likewise traces important conceptual developments across the political spectrum in the period 1900–22 ('Subject and Citizen', paper presented to conference 'Russia in the Great War', St Petersburg, 1998).

17 On the First World War as creating a culture of violence, see Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts*, pp. 9–12, 76–7, 128–30, 185, 195–9; Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (1920; Ann Arbor, 1961), pp. 65–8; Roger Pethybridge, *The Social Prelude to Stalinism* (New York, 1974), ch. 3.

18 In an analogous way, Sewell has suggested that there existed a general revolutionary ideology during the French Revolution, but with different variants ('Ideologies and Social Revolutions', pp. 74–6).

19 My discussion of surveillance has been influenced by Keith Baker, 'A Foucauldian French Revolution?' in Goldstein, ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History*.

20 On the development of Soviet surveillance, see E. A. Sikorskii, 'Sovetskaia

sistema politicheskogo kontrolia nad naseleniem v 1918–1920 gg.', *Voprosy istorii* no. 5 (1998), pp. 91–100; Irina Davidjan, 'Voennaia tsenzura v Rossii, 1918–1920', *Cahiers du Monde russe* v. 38, no. 1–2 (1997), pp. 117–25 and Vladlen Izmozik, *Glaza i ushi rezhima* (St Petersburg, 1995).

21 For daily summaries of the Southern Front's political department for 1919, see Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv, Moscow (hereafter, RGVA), f. 100, op. 2, dd. 162, 165–6.

22 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rostovskoi Oblasti, Rostov (hereafter, GARO), f. R-97, op. 1, d. 772, ll. 19–21 (emphasis in original).

23 Izmozik, *Glaza i ushi rezhima* is the best account of these developments.

24 Iu. P. Khranilov, '"Chto im delo do chuzhikh pisem, kogda briukho syto": voennaia tsenzura Viatskoi gubernii v bor'be za pobedu nad germantsami', *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* no. 2 (1997), pp. 22–9; L. G. Protasov, 'Vazhnyi istochnik po istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia tsarskoi armii pered fevral'skoi revoliutsii' in *Istochnikovedcheskie raboty*, 1 (Tambov, 1970).

25 For the temporary statute, see *Zakonodatel'nye akty vyzvannye voinoiu*, 2 vols. (Vil'na-Petrograd, 1914–15), v. 1, pp. 17–39; for the military guidelines on staffing these organs, *Polozhenie o polevom upravlenii voisk v voennoe vremia* (St Petersburg, 1914), articles 118, 126, 516.

26 Khranilov, 'Chto im delo', p. 28.

27 Davidjan, 'Voennaia tsenzura', p. 118.

28 Khranilov, 'Chto im delo', p. 24.

29 Protasov, 'Vazhnyi istochnik', pp. 8–9; Khranilov, 'Chto im delo', pp. 28–9; Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts*, p. 195. Likewise, German and British soldiers composed letters with the knowledge that their letters were being read: Bernd Ulrich, 'Feldpostbriefe im Ersten Weltkrieg: Bedeutung und Zensur' in Peter Knoch, ed., *Kriegsalltag* (Stuttgart, 1989), pp. 49, 62 and Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring* (New York, 1990), p. 147.

30 A. Miroliubov, 'Dokumenty po istorii departmenta politsii perioda pervoi mirovoi voiny', *Sovetskie arkhivy* no. 3 (1988), pp. 80–3.

31 For the summaries compiled by the Interior Ministry and army, see Holquist, 'Information', pp. 427–9.

32 *Voina i kostromskaia guberniia (po dannym ankety statisticheskogo otdeleniia)* (Kostroma, 1915).

33 On this and other measures, see Hubertus Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, 1995).

34 E. Krivtsov, 'Kniga i gazeta na voine', *Voennyi sbornik*, no. 11 (1915), pp. 85–92; see also *Voina i kostromskaia guberniia*, pp. 73–6

35 Stefan Plaggenborg, *Revolutionskultur* (Cologne, 1996), pp. 132–3; Charles Steinwedel, 'The Local Politics of Empire' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University).

36 Vera Slavenson, 'Sovremennyi plakat', *Russkaia mysl'*, v. 38, no. 3–4 (1917), pp. 81–94.

37 Holquist, 'Information', pp. 438–43.

38 George Buntz, *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918* (Stanford, 1938), ch. 7.

39 General Ludendorff (*sic*), *The Nation at War*, trans. A. S. Rappoport (London, (n.d.); a translation of *Der totale Krieg* (1935)), chs 1–2. The term 'totalitarian war' is the translator's. See also General Ludendorff, *The*

General Staff and its Problems, 2 vols (London, (n.d.)), chs 9–10. On Ludendorff's innovations, see Michael Geyer, 'German Strategy in the Age of Machine Warfare, 1914–1945' in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

40 For example, A. Svechin, 'General Ludendorff' (a review of Ludendorff's memoirs), *Voennaia nauka i revoliutsiia,* kn. 1 (1921), pp. 471–5, esp. p. 474; A. Verkhovskii, 'Propaganda kak boevoe sredstvo', *Voennyi vestnik* v. 43 (1924); D. Zuev, 'Gazeta vo vremia voiny', *Voennaia mysl' i revoliutsiia* 1924, kn. 3, pp. 11–25; F. Blumental', *Burzhuaznaia politrabota v mirovuiu voinu* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1928); Iu. Aliaritskii and S. Semeshevskii, *Progaganda v armiiakh imperialistov* (Moscow, 1931).

41 'Mart-Mai, 1917', *Krasnyi arkhiv* v. 15 (1926), pp. 30–60.

42 *Sbornik tsirkuliarov ministerstva vnutrennikh del za mart–iiun' 1917* (Petrograd, 1917), pp. 63–4; *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v 1917 godu* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1927), pp. xvii–xxvi, 412–13, 415–18, 421–2. Much of the quantitative material on the 1917 agrarian movement is derived from these Interior Ministry overviews.

43 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow (hereafter, GARF), f. 9505, op. 1, d. 3, ll. 9–12; d. 4, l. 1; d. 8, l. 5; op. 2, d. 2, ll. 18–19, 25; d. 10 (maps). I am indebted to David Hoffmann for bringing this agency to my attention and sharing his material on it.

44 *Zhurnaly zasedanii vremennogo pravitel'stva,* no. 140 (26 July 1917), points 11 g–d and appended instructions.

45 William Rosenberg, 'Social Mediation and State Construction(s)', *Social History* v. 19, no. 2 (1994), pp. 169–88, here at 188.

46 In 1919, the 'Don information agency' had a network of 200 sub-centers, 60 centers and nine district offices (GARO, f. 861, op. 1, d. 107, ll. 52–62, 77, 80).

47 Peter Holquist, 'Anti-Soviet *Svodki* from the Civil War', *Russian Review* v. 56, no. 3 (1997), pp. 445–50.

48 Wrangel Military Archive, Hoover Institution, box 47, folder 20; also box 38, folder 18.

49 'Iz dokumentov belogvardeiskoi kontrrazvedki', *Russkoe proshloe,* v. 2 (1991), pp. 341–2; similarly for the Don department of information, *Donskoi krai,* 14 May 1918.

50 Ludendorff made this precise point (*The General Staff,* 2, p. 388); for the Soviet period, Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain,* p. 226.

51 For bans on 'rumors of whatever sort' concerning military developments, see: point 20 of the 1914 'Temporary Statute on Military Censorship', a prohibition reiterated in the 1915 revision of the law; point 22 of the Provisional Government's 'list of information not subject to distribution'; for White laws banning rumors, see *Donskoi krai,* 1 May 1918 and GARO f. 46, op. 1, d. 4153, l. 17 and d. 4156, l. 8 (individuals sentenced for 'spreading rumors'); for similar Soviet decrees, see Davidjan, 'Voennaia Tsenzura', p. 119.

52 Holquist, 'Information', pp. 433–8; for OSVAG's use of agitational films and trains, see Vladimir Amfiteatrov-Kadashev, 'Stranitsy iz dnevnika', *Minuvshee* v. 20 (1996), pp. 565–6, 587, 595– 601. Amfiteatrov-Kadashev was head of OSVAG's film department.

53 Lev Anninskii, 'Krov' obagrila – smert' pobedila', *Rodina*, no. 9 (1996), pp. 10–14; François-Xavier Coquin, 'Une source méconnue: les affiches contre-revolutionnaires (1918–1920)' in Wladimir Berelowithc and Laurent Gervereau, eds, *Russie-URSS, 1914–1991* (Paris, 1991).

54 P. S. Makhrov, 'Doklad' (8 April 1920), in Makhrov, *V beloi armii generala Denikina* (St Petersburg, 1994), pp. 281-6.

55 Amfiteatrov-Kadashev, 'Iz dnevnikov', pp. 575–6. On the later Soviet appropriation of Taylorism, see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (New York, 1989), ch. 7.

56 The term is Chartier's ('Chimera', p. 176).

57 The Kadets had proposed a Ministry of Food Supply in 1915–16 (*Sten. Otchety gosudarstvennoi dumy*, sozyv 4, sessiia 5, col. 339); for the agriculture ministry's proposal for a state grain monopoly, see *Russkoe slovo*, 30 August 1916.

58 For example, N. A. Orlov, *Prodovol'stvennoe delo v Rossii vo vremia voiny i revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1919); N. D. Kondrat'ev, *Rynok khlebov i ego regulirovanie vo vremia voiny i revoliutsii* (1922; reprint, Moscow, 1991).

59 See especially Lars Lih, *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914–1921* (Berkeley, 1990); also George Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize* (Urbana, 1982), chs 10–11; Alessandro Stanziani, 'Spécialistes, bureaucrates et paysans'; Vladlen Loginov, 'Prodovol'stvennaia politika (osen' 1917-go)', *Svobodnaia mysl'* no. 10 (1997), pp. 26–36.

60 Ludendorff, *General Staff and its Problems*, ch. 4; Gerald Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918* (Princeton, 1966); Joseph Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven, 1929); E. M. H. Lloyd, *Experiments in State Control at the War Office and Ministry of Food* (Oxford, 1924); Sir William H. Beveridge, *British Food Control* (Oxford, 1928).

61 On Russian attention to German food supply measures, see Yaney, *Urge*, ch. 10. For examples, see nearly any issue of *Russkaia mysl'* (with articles by Peter Struve) or *Vestnik evropy* (with articles by Lur'e, a pseudonym of the future left Bolshevik and planning enthusiast Larin).

62 On the concept of a managed economy, based on the principles of *Kriegswirtschaft*, see G. Binshtok, *Voprosy prodovol'stvennogo snabzheniia v voennom khoziaistve Germanii* (Moscow, 1918); A. Savel'ev, 'Voprosy pitaniia po opytu mirovoi voiny', *Voenno-sanitarnyi sbornik* no. 3 (1926), pp. 53–8; A. Karpushin-Zorin, 'Mirovaia voina i prodovol'stvennyi vopros', *Voina i revoliutsiia* no. 8 (1926), pp. 80–92; Ia. M. Bukshpan, *Voenno-khoziaistvennaia politika: formy i organy regulirovaniia narodnogo khoziaistva za vremia mirovoi voiny, 1914–1918* (Moscow, 1929); E. Khmel'nitskaia, *Voennaia ekonomika Germanii, 1914–1918: opyt teorii analiza voen. khoziaistva* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1929). In addition, the military publishing house put out a 1926 Russian translation of Rudolf Klaus's *Die Kriegswirtschaft Russlands bis zur bolschewistischen Revolution* (Bonn–Leipzig, 1922).

63 GARF f. 1258, op. 2, d. 53, l. 8; see also *Otchet upravliaiushchego otdelom prodovol'stviia VVD* (Novocherkassk, 1919).

64 *Donskie vedomosti*, 7 October 1918; on the widespread embrace of food supply management across the political spectrum in 1917, see Loginov, 'Prodovol'stvennaia politika'.

65 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, St Petersburg (hereafter,

RGIA), f. 457, op. 1, d. 683, ll. 63, 67, 69, 206–7; GARF, f. 1258, op. 2, d. 53, l. 5.

66 RGIA f. 457, op. 1, d. 683, l. 86 (1915 committees for combating inflation); *Sbornik zakonov priniatykh bol'shim voiskovym krugom VVD, 15 aug.-20 sent. 1918* (Novocherkassk, 1918), pp. 24–7 ('zakon po bor'be's dorogoviznoi i spekuliatsiei').

67 Alvin Gouldner, 'Stalinism: a Study of Internal Colonialism', *Telos* v. 34 (1977), pp. 5–48, here at p. 27; see also Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore, 1987), p. 210.

68 For the Provisional Government, see *Sistematicheskii sbornik dekretov i rasporiazhenii pravitel'stva po prodovol'stvennomu delu*, 4 vols (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1920), v. 1, pp. 204–16 and Robert Brower and Alexander Kerensky, eds, *The Russian Provisional Government* (hereafter *RPG*), 3 vols (Stanford, 1961), v. 2, pp. 618–22, 641–2, 644. For the Don Government's directives, GARF f. 1258, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 27–9; GARF f. 1258, op. 2, d. 10, l. 1.

69 Yaney, *Urge*, pp. 433–42; Lih, *Bread*, chs 3–4. For the laws, see *Russkoe slovo*, 23 Aug. 1917; *RPG*, pp. 647–53.

70 GARF f. 452, op. 1, d. 35, ll. 16–22; d. 19, ll. 8–9; d. 14, ll. 10, 15–18, 24, 27; d. 14, l. 24 (reports by the Don Information Agency on the course of the harvest).

71 For Soviet laws requiring judicial punishment for non-compliance with food supply directives throughout 1918 and early 1920, see *Sistematicheskii sbornik* v. 1, pp. 33–4, 106–7, 217; v. 3, pp. 140–1, 148–9; v. 4, 237. For the general course of Soviet food supply, see Lih, *Bread*.

72 *Sistematicheskii sbornik*, v. 3, pp. 148–9 (my emphasis).

73 Alvin Gouldner, 'Stalinism as Internal Colonialism', pp. 41–2.

74 *Otchet 3-mu s"ezdu sovetov Donskoi oblasti* (Rostov, 1921), pp. 41–2; GARO f. R-1891, op. 1, d. 166, ll. 208–17 (data on disposition of shock detachments for November 1920); RGVA f. 28087, op. 1, d. 81, ll. 44, 71 (telegrams from Commander of Forces for the Don Territory on the disposition of military units).

75 *Dekrety sovetskoi vlasti*, 12 vols (Moscow, 1957–87), v. 11, p. 386; *Biulleten' Donprodkoma* no. 2 (1 December 1920), p. 16; *Donskaia bednota*, 3 December 1920; *Otchet 3-mu s"ezdu sovetov donskoi oblasti*, p. 147.

76 GARO f. R-97, op. 1., d. 532, l. 21 (report to the Don Revolutionary Tribunal on the activity of the assizes in the Second Don district).

77 For assizes operating along with shock groups, legitimizing their punitive acts, see GARO f. R-1891, op. 1, d. 76, ll. 119, 133, 136–7, 148, 167 (reports, excerpts and orders of the commander of a shock group and the plenipotentiary head of an assize accompanying his unit); *Biulleten' Donprodkoma*, no. 4–5 (January 1921), pp. 4–5 and no. 6 (February 1921), (unpaginated: pp. 12–13); GARO f. R-1220, op. 1, d. 39, l. 2 (list of citizens convicted by special session of Upper Don District assizes of the Don Revolutionary Tribunal for non-fulfillment of state assessments).

78 GARO f. R-97, op. 1, d. 532, ll. 18–19, 21–2, 26, 28–9, 31, 33; broadsheets bearing copies of these sentences, ll. 36, 38–47.

79 Richard Cobb, *The People's Armies* (New Haven, 1987), esp. book 2, chs 3–4.

80 For the argument that Bolshevik doctrine was distinguished by its 'self-

fulfilling prophecy of class hatred', see Lih, 'The Mystery of the ABC', *Slavic Review* v. 56, no. 1 (1997), p. 72; also Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain,* pp. 93, 281. In different ways, both Lih and Kotkin insist Bolshevik class manicheism be situated in its broader European context.

81 See David Hoffmann's comments in the conclusion to this volume.

82 Sewell, 'Ideologies and Social Revolutions', pp. 72–4; see also Reginald Zelnik, 'Circumstances and Political Will in the Russian Civil War', in Diane Koenker, William Rosenberg and Ronald Suny, eds, *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington, 1989).

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Part III

The Paradox of Human Redeemability in Soviet Russia

6

Cutting and Counting: Forensic Medicine as a Science of Society in Bolshevik Russia, 1920–29

Kenneth M. Pinnow

One of the tangible accomplishments of the early Soviet regime was the creation of a far-reaching, and highly coordinated, administrative apparatus capable of producing a vast array of information about the population. In the 1920s, the rise of centralized medical, statistical, and political organs resulted in an avalanche of both published and secret materials, including survey forms, time budgets, statistics, medical case studies, and political reports on 'mood' or 'attitude'. For historians, the significance of this development extends beyond the narrow, and ultimately unsatisfying, question of whether the products of this institutional set are reliable, and hence useful, for an 'authentic' reconstruction of everyday experience under the Bolsheviks. We should instead examine these 'social facts' as part and parcel of the larger political landscape which took form in Russia during the 1920s. In particular, this means making the very premise of 'society' and its scientific investigation a historical problem, rather than taking it for granted and proceeding directly to the analysis of its material legacy.

I contend that the diversity and abundance of empirical information reflected a significant moment in Russia's history – the triumph of a form of politics, generally shared, which emphasized the rational or scientific management of the social order as essential for the country's further development. Its practitioners, who included both Bolsheviks and non-party members alike, shared a vision of Soviet society as a distinct and integral whole which could be understood and eventually controlled through direct observation and therapeutic interventions on the part of self-professed 'social experts'.[1]

This essay examines one facet of this new political landscape – forensic-medical doctors and their efforts to achieve integration within the Soviet regime through the application of special scientific skills and knowledge to the body politic. Without forsaking the discipline's links to the legal apparatus, the proponents of forensic-medical expertise in the 1920s sought self-definition and power firmly inside the framework of Soviet social medicine, with its emphasis on the primacy of social factors in human health and disease, and its promotion of the ideal physician as a kind of social investigator. As such, they envisaged a broader role for the medical expert beyond the walls of the morgue or the courtroom docket to include the social domain. Like other practitioners of Soviet social medicine, the new forensic-medical examiner was to be a physician-sociologist (*vrach-sotsiolog*) who studied and cared for the general well-being of the population. This conception appeared to be a shift away from another powerful image of the legal physician – that of the doctor performing an autopsy on the corpse. However, despite representations of themselves as experts on the 'social organism', many medical examiners continued to emphasize their profession's traditional concern for the individual body and the particular story contained within it.

I suggest that these dual images of the Soviet forensic-medical expert did not simply communicate the absence of a unified vision of the discipline's content and boundaries; rather, they also reflected the lack of consensus among practitioners over several basic questions relating to the organization of the new social order. Forensic-medical doctors had difficulty constructing a single professional identity precisely because they could not fully agree on where to look for, and ultimately find, the primary determinants of individual thought and behavior. Were they somewhere inside the person's organism, in his or her biology/physiology, or were they located in social forces working on him or her? This question was, in turn, closely connected to the fundamental issue of the relationship between the individual and the rest of the population. How each of these problems was conceptualized had potential ramifications for forensic medicine, including the definition of its primary objects of study, the selection of its research strategies, and the delineation of its practitioners' place within the new regime.

These questions of social order, and their attendant disciplinary implications, are clearly visible in the work of Soviet forensic-medical doctors on suicides during the 1920s. On the one hand, the notion of the forensic doctor as a social scientist found its fullest expression in the Department of Forensic-Medical Expertise's program to register all cases of suicide inside the Russian Republic. Data from this study were used to create statistical analyses describing both the fundamentally social nature of suicide and the particular character of the Soviet social order. To make suicide 'social' was in effect to make the discipline 'social' as well. On the other hand, a number of leading forensic doctors continued to organize their practice around the autopsy of the individual suicide. By offering a strategy for investigating suicide which placed the role of biology above that of the social milieu, they underscored the medical expert's need to cut open the body and apply his special knowledge about the human organism in various states of death. The different emphasis between the two approaches is neatly captured in the Russian language: Those who regarded suicidal behavior as primarily the product of social forces studied suicide the phenomenon (*samoubiistvo*), whereas those in favor of a more particularistic explanation made suicide the individual (*samoubiitsa*) the primary object of their research.

Suicide and the individual body in forensic-medical practice

Beginning in 1919, for the first time in the history of Russia, doctors sought to investigate all cases of suicide, murder, and suspicious deaths within a highly centralized apparatus of legal or forensic medicine. In that year the People's Commissariat of Public Health (*Narkomzdrav*) established the Department of Forensic-Medical Expertise[2] and organized throughout the Russian Republic a uniform system of specially trained, independent, and full-time forensic-medical experts.[3]

The system of forensic medicine envisaged by Russian doctors during the 1920s communicated the objectives of total surveillance, complete transparency, and the hegemony of science. Ideally, in the very near future not a single case of death would escape the attention of the medical expert, who would open up the corpse and interpret it for others. The causes of science and justice in Soviet Russia would both be furthered by the simple expansion of the forensic-medical gaze. Subjecting ever more instances of death to a detailed forensic-medical investigation would not only produce more precise knowledge about how and why people died, but also ensure the discovery of objective truth (*istina*) in criminal matters. 'Clarity and definitiveness', argued the medical expert M. I. Raiskii, 'are revealed only in autopsy.'[4]

It was through the performance of an autopsy on the corpse that forensic-medical experts derived some of their most compelling claims for integration into the new medical and juridical apparatuses. Opening up the body allowed them to display special cognitive and technical abilities which few others possessed. Only the forensic-medical expert could read the body to establish the morphological signs of death, a medical sub-specialty formally known as thanatology, and provide the legal authorities with a scientifically based 'opinion' (*mnenie*) about the circumstances surrounding it. He could tell others about the specific cause (asphyxiation, poisoning, cardiac arrest, and so on) and the specific manner of death (natural or violent – murder, suicide, accident). Indeed, many forensic doctors contended that their unique ability to read the corpse was what distinguished them from other practitioners of the medical arts and justified their independence in the arena of Soviet jurisprudence.[5]

A small, but highly visible, group of forensic-medical experts also represented the autopsy as the primary means of producing a scientific understanding of suicide. Advocates of a biological explanation for human behavior, they maintained that the solution to the mystery of suicide existed somewhere inside the individual, and not the social, body. Only differences in the shape and structure of the individual organism could account for why only certain people chose to kill themselves when others, who lived under seemingly identical external circumstances, did not.[6]

To be sure, these physicians never suggested that outside factors were irrelevant to the formation of the suicidal personality. Instead, they denied externalities a primary role in its genesis. Proponents of a somatic interpretation of suicide maintained that social factors should not be confused with the underlying 'cause' of suicidal behavior; rather, they functioned mostly as the particular motive or grounds which finally compelled the predisposed individual to take his or her own life. Marital discord, loss of work, and other so-called social (*bytovye*) motives had such a devastating effect precisely because morphological changes inside the organism had weakened the individual psyche well in advance of the actual event. Aleksandr Ivanovich Kriukov, head of Moscow University's Department of Forensic Medicine and the leading advocate of the somatic paradigm, cogently summarized this interpretation of the dynamic interaction between the individual and his or her surroundings. 'The root cause of suicides', he contended, 'lies in the physical organization of the subject, who for the time being copes with the conditions of life. However, among these individuals can suddenly set in such perturbations in the psyche that the individual becomes capable of [committing] such an awful deed as taking his own life or the life of others (similar to him). However, external causes can play, although not always, only the role of a spark or stimulus.'[7]

This conception of the causal sequence behind suicide made the autopsy essential for solving the mystery of suicide. Post-mortem examination of the body was necessary to identify and catalogue a set of characteristic morphological changes in the body which could then be used by medical experts to determine not only the presence of a suicide, but also its underlying cause(s). Kriukov and others, for example, claimed to have detected in the corpses of suicides several distinctive 'signs' or 'stigmata' indicating the degeneration (*degeneratsiia*) of the skull due to a lack of proper correspondence between the size of the brain and the size of the skull cavity. Specifically, they identified the symptoms of this condition to be swelling of the brain; severe combs at the base of the skull; thinning of the bones in the cranial vault; premature skinning over or adhesion of the cranial sutures; severe tension in the dura mater's membrane; and greater brain mass compared to that of a non-suicide of comparable age, sex, and intellect. In effect, the brain was being compressed due to the insufficiency of space inside the head, which doctors understood to be both cause and symptom of several morphological changes. As a consequence of these transformations, the normal circulation and nourishment of the brain was said to be disrupted, leading not only to the starvation of the brain cells, but also to their 'pollution' from the build-up of cellular waste products.[8]

A number of forensic-medical doctors ventured into the relatively new fields of endocrinology and constitutional disorders to find a biological explanation for suicidal behavior. Particular attention was devoted to the rather ambiguous condition known as *Status thymico-lymphaticus*, a 'special condition of the endocrine glands' whose precise meaning and definition were the subject of numerous debates. Forensic doctors quarreled over both its symptoms and its relevance to suicide, with some suggesting that the condition was itself a cause of suicide while others attempted to link it to the morphological changes in the head described above.[9]

Kriukov and other forensic-medical experts claimed to have discovered those particular morphological changes which either indicated or produced a constitutional propensity in the individual to the onset of mental imbalance. Both the degeneration of the skull and the dysfunction of the endocrine system were said to result in the severe disruption of the organism's internal equilibrium, most notably in the realm of the nervous system. This in turn heightened the sensitivity of the individual psyche and made it overly susceptible to sudden crises linked to external perturbations. Under certain circumstances this organic sensitivity could lead to thoughts of suicide.

Making the body the primary seat of scientific and forensic knowledge about suicide had a number of implications for both the professional aspirations of the medical expert and his place within the Soviet regime. For if the ultimate source of truth rested inside the body, then the adoption of this explanatory paradigm privileged those few individuals who possessed the erudition and ability required to correctly understand the lifeless human organism, namely forensic-medical doctors. Moreover, the focus on the forensic-medical autopsy also reaffirmed the medical expert's desired status as a representative of 'science', whose revelatory powers were widely esteemed within Bolshevik Russia.

Forensic doctors often communicated this sense of cognitive power through the rhetoric of vision, illumination, and depth. In performing an autopsy, the medical expert opened up previously dark and hidden recesses of the body to his enlightened eyes and mind. He peeled away layers of tissue and noted the condition of the organism, looking for certain, tell-tale signs which only he could identify and which only he could interpret. In this way, the forensic doctor moved ever closer to revealing the truth, the secrets of the body giving themselves up to the representative of scientific reason. 'With knife in hand at the dissection table', wrote A. V. Parabuchev, 'the pathological anatomist and the legal doctor have attempted to solve the mystery of death.'[10]

The forensic-medical work on suicide in the 1920s also employed this imagery of enlightenment and revelation. Doctors sometimes described suicide, or at least the propensity for suicide, as a riddle whose solution resided somewhere inside the organism, waiting to be discovered through the diligent efforts of the specially trained medical expert. For example, in 1929 the legal physician V. P. Gavrilovskii wrote, 'When the investigator turned his attention to the very organism of the suicides, then the question of the causes of suicide became significantly clearer. That which was previously dark and incomprehensible now, under the study of the tissues and organs of the corpses of suicides, became fully explicable.'[11]

To find the physical signs of suicide in the body one only had to know where to look, be knowledgeable of their form, and have a desire to see them. Kriukov described his own discovery of the biological causes of suicide as the product of continuous self-enlightenment attained through the direct observation of more and more corpses. 'By looking more attentively at the anatomical structure of the suicides', he wrote, 'several anomalies and defects of the cranial bones automatically [*nevol'no*] caught the eye. At first we did not attribute a vital significance to these changes, considering them to be random; but over time, in proportion to the accumulation of experience and observations, we began to explain many phenomena associated with suicide by these changes.'[12]

As the somaticists envisaged it, once other forensic-medical doctors became familiar with the primary physiological signs of suicide, they too would begin looking for such indicators during their investigations of the corpse. In 1926 Kriukov claimed that a number of local practitioners were now using the signs of degeneration to make a differential diagnosis between suicide or murder. The forensic doctor's special ability to read and interpret the corpse assumed particular importance in those cases where the investigators lacked any sort of background information about the deceased (medical history, personal papers, testimonies, and so on) or when the suicide was thought to lack sufficient motive to explain such extreme behavior. Here the forensic-medical doctor essentially acted as a medium, giving voice to the particular story contained in the body and making it intelligible for others.

Within the context of the forensic-medical doctors' efforts to achieve integration within the Soviet regime, such displays of knowledge over the human body could be an important source of power. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that both the Communist Party and the Red Army recognized the legal physicians' expertise over the suicide during the 1920s. Although Party and military investigators professed devotion to the sociological interpretation of suicidal behavior, they nevertheless deferred to medical opinion when the body of the individual suicide was in question. For example, the authors of a 1926 report on suicides in the military claimed that any investigation into problem of cause (*prichina*), as opposed to grounds (*povod*), was beyond their capabilities, since its study 'demands for every individual case an analysis by medical personnel and other specialists'.[13] A separate study of suicides in the Moscow Komsomol included medical evidence of 'a hereditary disposition, an inborn tendency to suicide' to bolster Party investigators' own diagnoses of certain suicides. Finally, the Red Army's Political Administration (PUR) limited its ability to prevent suicide to those acts whose causes were linked to social conditions inside the military. Suicides associated with physical degeneration were deemed beyond its therapeutic reach.[14]

Official recognition of forensic-medical expertise in the sphere of the dead body, however, did not necessarily imply the dominance of those doctors who privileged biology in the formation of the suicidal personality. Their ideas encountered serious resistance within a general medical community that stressed the role of social forces in the health and well-being of the individual. Moreover, the somaticists themselves were hampered by their own internal differences and inconsistencies. They did not agree on the precise morphological indicators of suicide; nor could they find consensus over the specific meaning of these signs for the formation of the suicidal personality. Even more significant was the fact that Kriukov and others could not yet make a compelling argument for how their discoveries would benefit Soviet society as a whole. Most of their therapeutic strategies, especially those involving the endocrine system, were premised on future scientific discoveries or on a program of eugenics that might take generations to show its efficacy. No doubt such strategies clashed with general revolutionary sensibilities and, over the course of the 1920s, with growing impatience over the gradual, evolutionary transition to socialism represented by the New Economic Policy.

Both the potentials and the limitations of the biological understanding of deviant behavior are evident in an exchange that occurred in 1926 between the forensic doctor V. P. Nikol'skii and a local criminal inspector in Leningrad. Nikol'skii was among a prominent group of medical experts desiring acknowledgment as practitioners of a 'prophylactic' or preventative form of medicine. Before a gathering of the Leningrad Society of Medical Expertise he argued that forensic doctors' efforts to study criminality and other social 'anomalies' merited such recognition because they worked to prevent acts of deviance before they occurred. However, a regional criminal inspector disputed this characterization of the profession, questioning instead the discipline's applicability to the administration of the social domain. How could forensic medicine prevent future crimes, he asked, when crime is a social phenomenon and only a change in the social structure would produce a decrease? Nikol'skii's challenger recognized forensic-medical doctors' expertise over the dead body, but he did not necessarily make a connection between the opening of the corpse and the (re)organization of the Russian social order.[15] In other words, the investigator apparently did not conceive of the work of the forensic-medical examiner inside the morgue or clinic as being inherently 'social'.

The ability to cut open and read the suicide's body was therefore an important, but potentially limiting, source of forensic-medical authority in early Soviet Russia. It helped to affirm the medical expert's authority within the realm of the morgue, but seemingly did so at the cost of his exclusion from the social arena, where the grand experiment in transforming everyday life was taking place.

Out of the morgue and into the public arena: making forensic medicine 'social'

Under the leadership of the Chief Forensic-Medical Expert, Iakov Leont'evich Leibovich, a number of medical experts in the 1920s sought to place their discipline explicitly within the larger project of investigating and creating the Soviet body politic after the Revolution. As Leibovich instructed in a 1920 circular to provincial departments of medical expertise, '[F]orensic medicine should not limit itself to the autopsy of dead bodies and the investigation of living ones, but to a proper measure it should put its efforts into the business of studying and constructing social life.'[16]

The 'business of studying and constructing social life' involved the identification of those objects or areas of forensic-medical practice which had real implications for the well-being and development of the general population. Leibovich and other forensic-medical experts sought to demonstrate the 'social' relevance of the discipline, arguing that seemingly individual and random human events affected other members of society. In particular, they understood issues like suicide, abortion, and the transmission of venereal or congenital illnesses through marriage, as 'social problems' that both transgressed cultural norms and threatened the overall well-being of the populace. The treatment of such 'social illnesses' therefore required the involvement of the forensic-medical doctor to act as much in his capacity as a social scientist as in his role as an expert on the human organism.[17]

Among the primary expressions of this conceptual framework was the special program organized by the Department of Forensic-Medical Expertise for the 'scientific' study of suicide. Starting in mid-1920, all forensic-medical experts, in coordination with the police and criminal investigators, were required to complete a specially formulated survey form (*anketa o samoubiistvakh*) for every case of attempted or completed suicide occurring within their respective districts or regions. Every three months, the various provincial departments of forensic medicine collected the survey forms from their area and sent copies to the Central Department in Moscow, where they were collectively analyzed.[18]

On the basis of these completed survey forms, forensic-medical experts created statistical pictures or representations of the character of suicide in post-revolutionary society. Between 1920 and 1929, they compiled numerous quantitative studies on the problem of suicide in the Russian Republic, the dominant area of investigation, as well as one on Kazan'. By far the most prolific writer on suicide was the Chief Forensic-Medical Expert himself, Iakov Leibovich, who produced a number of publications and scholarly papers on the subject throughout the decade. As the primary spokesman and lobbyist for forensic medicine within the People's Commissariat of Public Health, Leibovich's promotion of the study of suicide was an important element in his efforts to situate the discipline within the larger framework of Soviet social medicine.[19]

Framing suicide a social, as opposed to a strictly individual or biological, phenomenon meant that legal physicians could turn their attention to the social milieu and make claims of expertise over the body politic, as well as the human body. Forensic-medical work on suicide can therefore be understood as part of the experts' attempts to establish and display the scientific and political credentials necessary to achieve for their discipline the status of a legitimate branch of Soviet social medicine, which was organized around four basic principles: the emphasis on the social aspects of health and disease; prophylaxis or the prevention of disease; the ideal of the practitioner as a social worker and social researcher (the so-called physician-sociologist (*vrach-sotsiolog*)); and service to the working class and the Soviet state as the expression of the former's interests. To varying degrees, these principles shaped the boundaries, methodologies, and research programs of each and every branch of medicine under Narkomzdrav.[20]

Consistent with the underlying principles of Soviet social medicine outlined above, many legal physicians advocated a sociological interpretation of human behavior and emphasized a prophylactic role for forensic-medical expertise. Whereas other branches of Soviet medicine fought against infectious and epidemic disease, the task of forensic-medical expertise extended beyond autopsies, examinations and investigations to the prophylaxis of crime, which one legal physician called 'the most severe social illness [*sotsial'naia bolezn'*]'.[21] According to this conception of forensic medicine, the expert would provide a valuable service to the Revolution by investigating the sicknesses of the social milieu, elucidating their causes, and helping to build a future society without crime and other so-called social anomalies. At the Second All-Russian Congress of Forensic-Medical Experts held in Moscow in 1926, the forensic-medical expert Golitsyn told his colleagues that their discipline merited respect and financial support as a form of preventative medicine: 'If the court fights and deals with crimes that have already been committed, then our struggle is directed against potential crime, so to speak, which has accumulated and slumbered unseen in society. . . . Forensic-medical work, therefore, is profoundly prophylactic, possessing enormous significance for social construction. It should be treated no differently than, for example, the provision of sanitation services [*sanitar'noe blagoustroistvo*], the preservation of infancy and motherhood, and so on.'[22]

On this basis, legal physicians in the 1920s argued for the establishment of a new, distinctly 'Soviet' type of forensic-medical expertise that included sociological research in addition to, or as a logical extension of, the more traditional areas of forensic-medical competency, such as the autopsy. They called on their colleagues to move out from behind the walls of the morgue and into the 'arena of broad social life'.[23] Such a conception of the discipline helped experts in the 1920s to differentiate themselves from their pre-revolutionary counterparts, who were commonly depicted as bureaucratic functionaries working at the beck and call of Tsarist legal officials. By contrast, the Soviet-era forensic doctor was to display independent initiative, possess a strong 'social streak', and, finally, apply his scientific knowledge to the benefit of all society. 'At the current time', wrote Leibovich, 'the forensic-medical expert is not a bureaucrat, but a social worker [*obshchestvennyi rabotnik*], not a functionary, but a sociologist [*sotsiolog*].'[24] Here, in the image of the doctor as social scientist or sociologist, we find the fullest expression of the ideal Soviet medical expert.

The idea of the medical expert as social scientist helps us to explain the particular interest shown by legal doctors to the problem of suicide during the 1920s. Forensic-medical experts apparently saw a strong affinity between empirical sociology, as an organized system of knowledge concerned with understanding, and governing the social order, largely with the study of social deviance or pathology. Indeed, for decades the dominant example of sociological research in both Russia and the West was so-called moral statistics (*moral'naia statistika*) devoted primarily to the measurement of those facts believed to best reflect the moral tenor of a culture, like abortion, crime, murder, and suicides. Moral statistics carried on the traditions of European sociology in Soviet Russia even after the formal dissolution of 'academic sociology' by the government in the early 1920s.

Given this association between deviance and social scientific research, forensic doctors believed themselves to be particularly well positioned to undertake an exhaustive study of the Soviet social order; after all, transgressions of legal and societal norms were among the aspects of daily life most frequently encountered in forensic-medical practice. Thus, Leibovich could speak of the Soviet forensic doctor studying 'society in the kaleidoscope of negative phenomena' and playing 'an enormous role in sociology' precisely because he was the closest of any medical professional to what he called the 'arena of the most sorrowful occurrences of human society'.[25] Similarly, Dr Dishlis, head of the Riazan' department of public health, told his colleagues in 1929 that forensic medicine could perhaps make its primary contribution in the area of the 'prophylaxis' and 'making life healthy' (*ozdorovlenie*) in Russia since legal doctors confronted and collected material on 'the most deformed pathological phenomena of our everyday life'.[26] Soviet forensic-medical experts in the 1920s attempted to establish claims to truth and special knowledge at this juncture between individual and social health.[27]

Within this context, the Department of Forensic-Medical Expertise's project to systematically collect and analyze statistical information on suicides was both an expression of the central tenets of Soviet social medicine and an effort to delineate an area of competency distinct from other branches of medicine also competing for recognition by the state. As Dr Golitsyn remarked before his fellow medical experts, the importance of the discipline's interest in problems such as suicide ultimately resided in the professed implications of such work for maintaining the health and well-being of the general population. He stated:

> Considered solely in terms of its influence on the decrease of the population as a result of murders, suicides, and so on, criminality is no less a social evil and calamity than famine, war, epidemics, etc. If infectious epidemics strike us every other decade and only for a short time, then criminal epidemics brutally cut down the population day after day. Crime statistics speak to the fact that across the entire Union every year is counted an entire army consisting of hundreds of thousands murdered and self-murdered, as well as individuals maimed and imprisoned (also dead members of society). Therefore we must spend no less energy and resources on the struggle against criminality, than we do on the struggle against infectious diseases. The state receives a great benefit from this, since a highly-developed criminality severely impedes all social construction, not to mention the loss of population.[28]

Coming into daily contact with individual acts of suicide, the forensic-medical expert would help to ensure a healthier future in Soviet Russia by diagnosing the underlying sources of pathology in the society and then working for their removal from the body politic. A direct link was therefore made between the individual objects of forensic-medical practice and the broader realm of the 'social'. '[T]he study of the motives and causes of suicides', stated Dr Ivorskii in 1929, 'has enormous prophylactic and social significance.'[29]

Envisioning the social organism: statistical representations of the Soviet body politic

It is no coincidence that Dr Golitsyn invoked crime statistics to make his case for the public benefits of forensic-medical expertise under Soviet power. Numbers gave forensic-medical experts, as social scientists, the ability to communicate their particular understanding of the body politic. As Ian Hacking has argued in his studies on the rise of statistical thinking in Europe, numbers have always been instruments of power for professions like medicine, which have as their primary concern information and control of the population.

In the case of forensic-medical experts in the 1920s, suicide statistics provided a vocabulary and a mode of representation which enabled the doctors to convey to others special knowledge of the inner workings of Soviet society, as well as the potential ability to direct the transformation of everyday life for the better. Hence Golitsyn's use of numbers to make a diagnosis of the population and to argue for the relevance of forensic-medical objects to the remainder of society.

The graphs, tables and charts produced by forensic-medical experts were all 'strategies of communication'[30] used to conceptualize and articulate to others their vision of the primary object of the physician's medico-sociological gaze – the Soviet body politic. I use the words 'vision' and 'gaze' here to emphasize that the quantitative reports were essentially the forensic doctor's only means to 'see' into the so-called social organism and to describe its condition. Historians of medicine have suggested that the doctor's ability to see within the human body was the source of much of his power *within* the society. By providing the forensic-medical expert with the means to visualize the body politic, and to convey this vision to others, statistics became an invaluable display of his or her power *over* society. Leibovich himself hinted at the imaginative component of this process when he employed the analogy of the paleontologist to describe his conception of the sociologist's work as it pertained to suicide: 'In the same way that the paleontologist can reproduce in his imagination an entire antediluvian animal on the basis of a single part of a skeleton, for example, a femur, . . . so too the sociologist, on the basis of a single group of phenomena or one link in the chain of social facts, is often capable of providing the characterization of the given society. This is what interests us about suicide.'[31]

It was this ability to provide a 'characterization of society' through suicide statistics that furthered the image of the forensic-medical expert as a social scientist. Through statistics, or more precisely what was read into the statistics, forensic doctors represented suicide as the product of social forces and, in turn, proved the existence of the social domain. Although legal physicians writing about suicide in the 1920s emphasized that every act of suicide was the result of an endlessly complex mixture of factors, many practitioners nevertheless stressed the dominance of causes located in the person's environment. Leibovich and other leading forensic experts were unequivocal in their insistence that suicide was first and foremost the consequence of socioeconomic conditions. The act of suicide was therefore conceived as an illness not of the individual, but of the 'social organism'; accordingly, one should look outside, not inside, the individual for the root causes of suicidal behavior.[32]

Applying the theories developed in Emile Durkheim's highly influential *Suicide: a Study in Sociology* (1897), forensic doctors used statistics to 'prove' what they already held to be true: despite their seemingly individual character, human acts like suicide were actually governed by social laws in much the same way that natural laws directed events in the natural world. Leibovich, for example, claimed that the persistent interest in suicide over the ages reflected the fact that such seemingly random acts displayed a certain uniformity or unity when placed together in the aggregate. Within forensic-medical and sociological discourse of the 1920s, the patterns they perceived in the distribution of the number of suicides in Russia, especially for the turbulent period 1914–21, were regarded as objective, empirical evidence of the existence of social forces operating outside the individual. Forensic-medical doctors cited the apparent decline in suicides beginning with the onset of the First World War, and the subsequent rise following the end of the Civil War, as direct confirmation of Durkheim's theory that suicide rates fall during periods of deep social crisis because personal interests are displaced by collective feelings. However, the doctors never raised the question of whether the chaotic conditions created by the wars and revolutions might have negatively affected the collection of data on suicides, thus creating the drop in numbers. To have done so might have raised doubts about the fundamental assumption read into all suicide statistics since the early nineteenth century: the regularities observed in the numbers on suicide were the most compelling evidence for the existence of 'society'.[33]

Suicide statistics did more than prove the existence of society; they also permitted forensic doctors to describe its character. The representation of suicide as the product of social forces outside the individual body implied that acts of suicide bore the markings of the given society in which they occurred. For example, Nikolai Semashko, head of Narkomzdrav, talked of the new conditions created by the 'Soviet system' finding reflection in the statistics of suicide, and Dr Golitsyn spoke of the objects of forensic-medical practice, which included suicide, as resembling 'negatives' upon which the 'ailments of society' were imprinted. To be more specific, forensic-medical doctors contended that the nature or ailments of the given society found their reflection in the rates of suicide (calculated as suicides per 1 000 000 population) and in the distribution of suicidal deaths according to such key categories as age, method, marital status, occupation, and sex. It was on the basis of this last marker – sex – that forensic-medical doctors in the 1920s claimed to have uncovered something new in the figures for suicide in the Russian Republic, a finding which helped greatly to establish the existence and distinctive character of a 'Soviet' society, as well as the fundamentally social nature of suicide.

Leibovich was the first person to 'discover' through suicide statistics that Soviet society was different from both the West and pre-revolutionary Russia, noting a unique pattern of suicidal deaths in a paper delivered to the First Congress of State Medical Experts in 1920. In this paper and others, he implied that the general character of suicide was contingent on both time and place: 'Every country *in a certain historical epoch* has a certain propensity for suicide.'[34] Although the 1920 paper was never published, summaries of Leibovich's work indicate that he claimed to detect a growing number of women among the overall total of suicides. According to Leibovich, the ratio of women to men before 1917 was 1:4; however, by his accounting the new ratio in 1920 was approximately 2:3. Leibovich elaborated upon these preliminary findings a few years later in his most exhaustive investigation into suicide, entitled *1,000 Contemporary Suicides (A Sociological Study)*, which he based on data from the forensic-medical surveys for 1920 and 1921. Here Leibovich argued that the number of female suicides relative to male suicides had roughly doubled compared to the figures for Russia before the October Revolution.[35]

Such arguments about the role of gender in suicide are themselves interesting for what they suggest about prevailing assumptions about social and sex roles. However, for the present discussion it is sufficient to note that among social researchers it was an unquestioned fact that men committed suicide more frequently than did women, although the specific ratio between the two depended on a number of social and cultural factors.

Leibovich (and others) attributed the apparent rise in female suicide to the role of social forces at work upon the individual. Presented as empirical fact, this argument simultaneously generated and substantiated the belief that the character of everyday life in the 1920s was distinctive from both the past and other countries. Leibovich exclaimed, 'This [increase] is extremely indicative and characteristic for the epoch we are living through!' To him, the greater number of female suicides was a clear, empirical sign of the emancipation of Russian women following the Revolution. He continued, 'The woman does not enjoy equality of rights in any other country. Nowhere else does she participate so intensively in social life. Only a social revolution having carried out a re-evaluation of all values and having made human labor the corner-stone of all interrelations could provide such equal rights.'[36] Several other physicians repeated the same argument in their own studies on suicide.[37]

The increase in women's suicides may have reflected the inclusion of figures for attempted suicides along with those of completed ones, as the general exclusion of attempted suicide, which tends to involve a larger percentage of women than men, helped to establish the canonical view in sociology about suicide being a male form of behavior.[38] Either way, Leibovich's explanatory framework rested as much on long-held and widespread assumptions about the relationship between gender, society, and suicide as it did on any objective 'reality'. He contended that previous studies had proven that suicides among the female sex were more frequent in those countries where women had a greater role in the country's political and economic life; by the same logic, they were rarest where women held a low legal position and where their interests did not extend beyond children and the home. In other words, family and hearth shielded women from the suicidogenic forces that acted on those individuals in the public sphere, that is men. 'A woman pays a high price', wrote Leibovich, 'for her equalization in civil rights.'[39]

The importance of this argument for establishing the existence of a uniquely Soviet society was not simply the fact that the numbers of women committing suicide had changed compared to the pre-revolutionary period. Rather, the numerical facts also functioned as empirical proof that the real active agent was not so much the individual, but society. According to the forensic experts Bychkov and Rachkovskii, the sharp increase observed in the number of female suicides in the Russian Republic 'served as extra proof that suicide, like crime, is a social phenomenon'.[40] In the numerical data, the forensic-medical experts found further justification for the metaphoric conception of suicide as a form of disease which strikes 'epidemic-like, at a community, better resisted by some than others'.[41]

Leibovich could therefore warn his readers of some menacing trends he had observed in the early results from the forensic-medical survey forms. In particular, he spoke of a possible escalation in the number of suicides among Russian children if nothing was done to alleviate their situation under the New Economic Policy. Evoking memories of the so-called epidemics of students and young people which followed after the failed Revolution of 1905, Leibovich warned that a similar rise in suicide among youth was possible following a sharp decline in their respective suicide rate during the period of wars and Revolution. Rising social dislocation, a heightening of the influence of the family and the school, and the generally difficult conditions for education in the country all threatened to make for a 'repetition' of the pre-revolutionary years. 'The first ominous signs', wrote Leibovich, 'are already visible! The prognosis is serious should the protection of children in the broadest sense of the word not be given its proper due, in order to successfully fight against the self-destruction of children!'[42]

Conclusion

Underlying the debates on suicide in the 1920s was the fundamental question of the relationship between the social whole and its constituent elements, an issue which found partial expression in the definitions of Soviet forensic medicine. In fact, calls for the discipline's practitioners to explore different forms of everyday life rested on and perpetuated the assumption that the individual was an inherently social being, whose seemingly independent actions had meaning for the rest of the population. 'Every suicide', wrote the forensic doctor P. A. Maskin, 'must be looked upon as a socially-sick element, harmful to society.'[43] Such an understanding of suicide, and of human behavior more generally, greatly strengthened the idea that the protection of social 'health' required the forensic-medical doctor to act in the capacity of the social expert, actively investigating and caring for the new Soviet body politic.

When examined in this context, suicide statistics from the early years of Soviet power come to represent more than a simple totaling of the numbers and kinds of people who took their own lives in the 1920s. Instead, these social facts must also be seen as a reflection of their creators' world view and the larger political landscape in which they lived and worked. In their depictions of how 'the Soviet system introduced something truly new to the statistics of suicides',[44] forensic-medical doctors articulated a belief that Russian society was a distinct entity that could be known and understood. By providing a means to map 'pathology' within it, statistics provided them with both a means for attaining such enlightenment and a powerful rationale for their participation in the revolutionary experiment. In effect, the numbers helped the expert to count in the new Soviet system.

Notes

1 For a fuller explication of this argument see my 'Making Suicide Soviet: Medicine, Moral Statistics, and the Politics of Social Science in Bolshevik Russia, 1920–30' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1998).

2 For stylistic reasons, throughout this paper I have chosen to translate the Russian *sudebnaia-meditsina* or *sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza* alternatively as legal medicine, forensic medicine, and forensic-medical expertise. The subtle differences which the terms express regarding professional and disciplinary boundaries are not of great import to the discussion below.

3 The organization of this apparatus actually began in 1918 with the creation of a sub-department of forensic medicine under Narkomzdrav's Department of Civilian Medicine. During a general reorganization of Narkomzdrav in the following year this sub-department was upgraded to the status of an independent department. On the founding and early years of Soviet forensic medicine see Ia. Leibovich, 'Tri goda sudebnoi meditsiny', *Izvestiia narodnogo komissariata zdravookhraneniia*, no. 1–2 (1922), pp. 11–13; and V. A. Rozhanovskii, 'Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii i v SSSR', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 6 (1927): Supplement, pp. 1–105.

4 M. Raiskii, 'Poriadok sudebno-meditsinskogo issledovaniia trupa', *Trudy II Vserossiiskogo s"ezda sudebno-meditsinskikh ekspertov. Moskva, 25 fevralia–3 marta 1926 g.*, ed. Ia. Leibovich (Ul'ianovsk, 1926), p. 125.

5 See, for example, Raiskii, 'Poriadok sudebno-meditsinskogo issledovaniia trupa', p. 123; and Rozhanovskii, 'Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii i v SSSR', p. 8.

6 The forensic doctor V. P. Gavrilovskii wrote that 'the researcher is sometimes forced to search for the cause of suicide not outside the person, but inside of him, in the tissues and organs of his body, in the biological functions of his body. . . . Subjects of different [internal] composition behave differently under equal conditions.' V. P. Gavrilovskii, 'K voprosu ob anatomicheskikh izmeneniiakh na trupakh samoubiits', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 11 (1929), p. 59.

7 A. I. Kriukov, 'K voprosu o prichinakh samoubiistv', *Nevrologiia i psikhiatriia*, v. 1, no. 1 (Orel', 1923), p. 295.

8 A. I. Kriukov, 'O degeneratsii cherepa u samoubiits', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 1 (1925), pp. 18–24; idem, 'O degeneratsii cherepa', *Arkhiv kriminologii i sudebnoi meditsiny*, v. 1, no. 2–3 (1927), pp. 705–14; and D. I. Ziskind, 'Degeneratsiia cherepa kak faktor, pomogaiushchii

stavit' diferentsial'nyi diagnoz mezhdu ubiistvom i samoubiistvom', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 14 (1930), p. 49.

9 See, for example, A. V. Parabuchev, '*Status thymicus* u samoubiits kak morfologicheskii pokazatel' rasstroistva inkretornoi sistemy (avtoreferat)', *Vtoroi s"ezd khirurgov Severo-kavkazskogo kraia. 12–15 ianvaria 1927 g.* (Rostov na Donu, 1927), pp. 263–7; T. A. Sharbe, 'Sudebnyi medik i Status Thymico-Lymphaticus', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 7 (1928), pp. 68–72; and Ia. I. Stal'nov, 'Puti bio-khimicheskogo analiza lichnosti samoubiitsy', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 5 (1927), pp. 7–11.

10 Parabuchev, '*Status Thymicus* u samoubiits', p. 263.

11 Gavrilovskii, 'K voprosu ob anatomicheskikh izmeneniiakh na trupakh samoubiits', p. 59. Similarly, Iakov Ivanovich Stal'nov concluded his article with a prediction that science would someday 'shed light on the still dark personality of the suicide'. Stal'nov, 'Puti bio-khimicheskogo analiza lichnosti samoubiitsy', p. 11.

12 Kriukov, 'K voprosu o prichinakh samoubiistva', p. 288.

13 'Kratkii obzor o samoubiistvakh v Krasnoi Armii i vo Flote za 1924–25 gody', Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (RTsKhIDNI), f. 17, op. 85, d. 126, l. 100.

14 *Statisticheskii ezhegodnik za 1928/29 god. Politiko-moral'noe sostoianie RKKA*, Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voinnyi Arkhiv (RGVA), f 54, op. 4, d. 64, l. 45ob.

15 '1-I Sibirskii kraevoi s"ezd medekspertov sovmestno s deiateliami suda i sledstviia. S 22 po 26 sentiabria 1929 goda', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 15 (1931), p. 71.

16 Circular from Iakov Leibovich to provincial sub-Departments of Medical Expertise dated 27 February 1920, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 482, op. 1, d. 208, l. 35.

17 In his summary of the early activities of the forensic-medical apparatus Leibovich noted, 'Even deep social problems [*sotsial'nye problemy*] which have a significance for the entire state, as well as for all humankind, were not foreign to the Department.' Leibovich, 'Tri goda sudebnoi meditsiny', p. 12. He also referred to suicide as a social problem in his 'Piat' let sudebnoi meditsiny', *Ezhenedel'nik sovetskoi iustitsii*, v. 34 (30 August 1923), p. 777.

18 On the organization of the registration of suicides see especially: Letter of 26 April 1920, from Iakov Leibovich to provincial sub-Departments of Medical Expertise, GARF f. 486, op. 1, d. 208, ll. 38–9, which includes a copy of the 'Anketa o samoubiistvakh'; and Letter of 5 July 1920 from the Department of Forensic Medicine to provincial sub-Departments of Medical Expertise, GARF f. 486, op. 1, d. 208, l. 44.

19 This impression of Leibovich's participation is confirmed by the archival record on the organization of the collection and analysis of data on suicide. See, for example, Letter of 26 April 1920, from Leibovich to the provincial sub-Departments of Medical Expertise, GARF f. 482, op. 1, d. 208, ll. 38–9. Dr V. A. Rozhanovskii, a chronicler of forensic medicine's development in the early Soviet period, argued that one of Leibovich's primary contributions to the field was his lobbying 'for the

right of legal medicine as a social science'. See Rozhanovskii, 'Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza v dorevoliutsionnoi rossii v SSSR', pp. 56–7.

20 Susan Gross Solomon persuasively argues that this direction in Soviet medicine was the product of a number of factors, including the historical tradition of community medicine in Russia, the financial exigencies of the young Soviet state, and the environmentalist ideology of the Bolshevik leadership (that is, the belief in nurture over nature). See Susan Gross Solomon, 'Social Hygiene and Soviet Public Health, 1921–1930', in Susan Gross Solomon and John F. Hutchinson, eds, *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington, 1990), pp. 175–99; and idem, 'The Expert and the State in Russian Public Health: Continuities and Changes Across the Revolutionary Divide', in Dorothy Porter, ed., *The History of Public Health and the Modern State* (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 183–223.

21 *Trudy II Vserossiiskogo s"ezda sudebno-meditsinskikh ekspertov*, p. 80.

22 *Trudy II Vserossiiskogo s"ezda sudebno-meditsinskikh ekspertov*, p. 80. In a paper entitled, 'The Role of Legal Medicine in the Area of Prophylactics', Dr V. P. Nikol'skii also argued that forensic medicine was essentially a prophylactic science and that it needed to adopt a 'prophylactic bent' (*uklon*) under the conditions of the Soviet system. By studying the genesis of crime, he contended, forensic medicine helped to fight against crimes themselves, as well as other social anomalies. 'Nauchnye zasedaniia Obshchestva Meditsinskoi Ekspertizy g. Leningrada i gubernii', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 6 (1927), pp. 68–9.

23 Rozhanovskii, 'Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii i v SSSR', pp. 56–7.

24 Ia. Leibovich, 'Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza pri NEP'e', *Ezhenedel'nik sovetskoi iustitsii*, no. 2 (23 January 1923), p. 37.

25 Leibovich, 'Piat' let sudebnoi meditsiny', p. 775; and 'Tesizy doklada D-ra Leibovicha po temu: Polozhenie Gosudarstvennogo Meditsinskogo Eksperta, ego prava i obiazannosti i otnoshenie k sudo-sledstvennym i drugim organam i "Organizatsiia Meditsinskogo Ekspertizy i eia blizhaishchiia zadachi" ', GARF f. 482, op. 1, d. 217, l. 12.

26 'Gubernskoe soveshchanie sudebnomeditsinskikh ekspertov Riazanskoi gubernii pri uchastii predstavitelei iustitsii i organov doznaniia. (g. Riazan', 2–4 fevralia 1929 g.)', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 13 (1930), p. 80.

27 Leibovich, for example, saw the tasks before the discipline as 'the study and prophylaxis of violations of the law, which so often go hand in hand with somatic or psychiatric disorders'. Leibovich, 'Piat' let sudebnoi meditsiny', p. 775.

28 *Trudy II Vserossiiskogo s"ezda sudebno-meditsinskikh ekspertov*, p. 80.

29 To Ivorskii, the identification of alcoholism and other forms of everyday life as being important factors in the etiology of suicide 'placed the accent on the prophylaxis of suicides, indicating their causes to those who should grasp their significance as prophylacticians and social workers'. 'Nauchnoe soveshchanie pri kafedre sudebnoi meditsiny leningradskogo instituta dlia sovershenstvovaniia vrachei', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 14 (1930), p. 157.

30 The term is taken from Theodore M. Porter, *Trust in Numbers: the Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton, 1995), p. viii.

31 Ia. Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv (Sotsiologicheskii ocherk)* (Moscow, 1923), p. 3. In the same depiction, Leibovich also makes a comparison to the chemist unlocking the mysteries of a previously unknown substance. The Omsk physician A. I. Zakonov similarly raised the possibility of connecting the facts gathered in the realm of forensic-medical practice to 'the entire picture of the social order'. A. I. Zakonov, 'Mnenie i zakliuchenie', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 11 (1929), p. 84.

32 See, for example, the editorial note accompanying the article by Aleksandr Kriukov in the primary publication of Soviet legal medicine, *Forensic-Medical Expertise*. The journal's editors, who included Leibovich, strongly disavowed Kriukov's contention that 'degenerative transformations' of the cranium were a primary cause of suicide in particular and criminality in general, arguing instead that 'social–economic conditions' were the fundamental basis of suicidal behavior. Kriukov, 'O degeneratsii cherepa u samoubiits', p. 18. In addition, Nikolai Semashko, head of Narkomzdrav, underscored the fundamental role of social causes in his several statements on the problem of Soviet suicide. See N. A. Semashko, 'Ugrozhaet li nam epidemiia samoubiistv?', *Izvestiia TsIK Sovetov*, no. 18 (2646) (22 January 1926), p. 5; idem, 'Predislovie', in N. P. Brukhanskii, *Samoubiitsy* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 5–6; and his contribution to 'O samoubiistve. Nasha anketa', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, no. 5 (613) (7 January 1926), p. 2.

33 To be precise, the discovery of 'society' meant proving the existence of social laws or forces which operated according to their own logic, outside the influence of individual human beings. See Porter, *Trust in Numbers*, p. 37; and idem, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking 1820–1900* (Princeton, 1986), ch. 2.

34 My emphasis. 'O samoubiistve. Nasha anketa', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, no. 5 (613) (7 January 1926), p. 2; Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv*, p. 4; and idem, 'Sovremennye samoubiistva v Sovetskoi Rossii', in D. P. Kosorotov, *Uchebnik sudebnoi meditsiny*, 2nd posthumous edn (Moscow–Leningrad, 1926), p. 295.

35 Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv*, pp. 5–6.

36 Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv*, pp. 5–6. See also the similar argument made in his 'K kharakteristike sovremennykh samoubiistv', *Ezhenedel'nik sovetskoi iustitsii*, no. 14 (12 April 1923), p. 315.

37 See, for example, I. Ia. Bychkov and S. Ia. Rachkovskii, 'Samoubiistva v RSFSR posredstvom otravleniia za 1920–1924 gg.', *Trudy II Vserossiiskogo s"ezda sudebno-meditsinskikh ekspertov*, p. 222; P. A. Maskin, 'Samoubiistva v Leningrade s 1922 g. po 1925 god (Avtoreferat)', *Sudebno-meditsinskaia ekspertiza*, book 6 (1927), p. 71; and the comments of Nikolai Semashko in Brukhanskii, *Samoubiitsy*, p. 5.

38 For an illuminating discussion of how this 'fact' embodied the transposition of assumptions about sex roles and patriarchal society onto the numerical data and methods of investigation see Howard I. Kushner, 'Women and Suicide in Historical Perspective', *Signs*, v. 10, no. 3 (Spring

1985), pp. 537–52; and idem, 'Suicide, Gender, and the Fear of Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Medical and Social Thought', *Journal of Social History*, v. 26, no. 3 (Spring 1993), pp. 461–90.

39 Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv*, p. 5.

40 Bychkov and Rachkovskii, 'Samoubiistva v RSFSR', p. 222.

41 Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (New York, 1990), p. 177.

42 Leibovich, *1000 sovremennykh samoubiistv*, pp. 7– 8.

43 Maskin, 'Samoubiistva v Leningrade', p. 71.

44 Brukhanskii, *Samoubiitsy*, p. 5.

7

'The Dictatorship of Sex': Science, Glands, and the Medical Construction of Gender Difference in Revolutionary Russia

Frances L. Bernstein

> In a word, a castrated man is not a man, not in body, not in character.
>
> Dr A. Timofeev[1]

> The famous scientist Virchow said that 'all that we worship in woman she owes to her ovaries.'
>
> Professor T. I. Iudin[2]

In a 1920s pamphlet extolling the benefits of exercise for a healthy and well-ordered sex life, Dr B. A. Ivanovskii employed an example encountered frequently in popular medical literature on sex during this era. To substantiate his claim that the proper functioning of the body depends upon the health and maintenance of the sex glands, Ivanovskii described the transformation which occurs following their removal. His evidence was a series of experiments conducted by the scientist M. M. Zavadovskii in 1919–22 involving the castration of chickens and roosters.[3] He explained:

> After removing the ovaries, the chicken began to grow a rooster's plume with its bright color and form, spurs, and comb; when the rooster's testicles were removed the bird became smaller; the castrated rooster and chicken began to look surprisingly alike.
>
> When a second operation was conducted and the ovaries of the chicken were implanted into the castrated rooster, and the testicles of the rooster into the chicken, an even more shocking

> change occurred. The former chickens became surprisingly similar to real [*nastoiashchii*] roosters, cried 'ku-ku-ri-ku', stamped at and shook their wings at the chickens, summoned them to eat, fought with the other roosters, and so on. The former roosters, on the other hand, in appearance and character were transformed into real chickens and even began to form eggs which were possible to feel in their stomachs, but which they couldn't lay, since they didn't have a way to lay them.

Ivanovskii concluded this description with the following parenthetical note:

> (These 'former' chickens and 'former' roosters even now happily prosper in the Moscow Zoo, and those who find themselves in Moscow ought to drop by there and with their own eyes be convinced of the significance of the sex glands and the power of science.)[4]

The recurring references in sexual enlightenment literature to these experiments, and more generally to the sex glands and their functions, are the subject of this study. In an unvarying narrative repeated in countless pamphlets, lectures, and articles, medical educators cited recent developments in endocrinology[5] to advocate abstinence and sublimation, and to warn against the dangers of masturbation and pre-marital and frequent sex. However, rather than focus on these themes, this chapter will instead address two unquestioned assumptions about sexuality in this literature, 'proven' by the sex glands, upon which the entire program of sexual enlightenment rested: the 'naturalness' of both gender difference and heterosexuality.

The concept of scientifically verified sexual difference was central to popular medical education on sex during the 1920s. Drawing upon research in the field of endocrinology enabled physicians to prescribe sex-specific behaviors which were justified as corresponding to the natural differences between men and women. The biological determinism implicit in their analyses of the glands also allowed physicians to define the parameters of normal and abnormal masculinity and femininity. Educators could then pathologize those forms of sexual expression which did not, in their estimation, correspond to these norms. This essay contends that these two functions help explain medical and popular interest in endocrinology during the 1920s, since they seemed to provide clear-cut, irrefutable evidence of appropriate male and female conduct in this era of social upheaval and political instability.[6] The immediate post-revolutionary years were a time of great insecurity, which was frequently conceived of as a crisis of sexuality and gender.[7] The 'glass of water theory', the reputed prevalence of masturbation and prostitution, and an alleged epidemic of male impotence seemed to indicate that something was terribly wrong in contemporary life, that the 'natural order of things' had been disrupted. Perhaps most alarming to observers and social commentators was the fear that women had stopped behaving like 'real' women, and men like 'real' men. In this context research on the endocrine glands seemed to provide conclusive, irrefutable scientific proof that the chaos reigning in Soviet Russia was unnatural. If only people heeded their advice, doctors suggested, the natural order would be re-established.

According to medical educators, the purpose of sexual enlightenment was 'to make it clear to [readers] how healthy sex is to be understood'[8] by approaching 'the interesting but difficult question about sexual life . . . from the purely scientific point of view'.[9] In these accounts the scientific viewpoint began with an introduction to the sex glands and their functions. Writers explained that at the onset of puberty these glands begin to produce both external and internal secretions: the sperm and egg cells necessary for reproduction and the sex hormones, which enter directly into the blood.[10] Once in the bloodstream these hormones were thought to have a profoundly invigorating effect upon the body, suffusing it with energy, strength, and vitality.[11] Doctors cautioned, however, that frequent, deviant, or early sexual activity (before the body reaches sexual maturity, sometime between 20 and 25 years of age) overtaxes the glands, leading to premature aging and the threat of impotence or infertility.[12]

To substantiate this claim and demonstrate the overriding importance of the glands, these accounts drew upon an experience familiar to countless Russians: the castration of livestock and domestic animals.[13] Castration, they explained, made violent, strong and obstinate animals tamer, better tempered, more accommodating.[14] It also caused physical changes, depriving a stag of his antlers, a bull of his horns, a rooster of his comb and beautiful, plumed tail feathers.[15] Pamphlets went on to consider those humans who had undergone this procedure for religious, political, or medical reasons, a list including harem guards, Catholic choirboys, and most frequently Russia's own *skoptsy*, the religious sect whose members 'mutilated themselves thinking it would please God'.[16] As one booklet explained, in a castrated male:

> sexual feeling disappears, the growth of the mustache, beard and other male traits is suspended, the voice becomes high, like a woman's, strength disappears, on the buttocks, hips and chest fat accumulates, the skin becomes soft and flabby; externally, the man begins to look like a woman. Not only his external appearance but also his character changes: such male traits as bravery, energy, enterprise disappear; there appear instead sluggishness, callousness, stinginess, depression, and eventually sickness and early aging.[17]

Educators portrayed eunuchs as crafty, malicious, vindictive, lacking in individuality, and mentally deficient. With puffy faces, watery, glazed eyes, and sallow, pale skin, they were labeled 'half dead', in the words of one physician.[18] Another concluded, 'In a word, castrates are distinguished by those traits which are antithetical to a clearly expressed masculinity - to a strong and open character.'[19]

Accounts also described the consequences of 'castration', or its functional equivalents, on women:

> Removing a woman's sexual glands also has a strong effect on her entire organism and character. Sexual attraction disappears, breast growth ceases, hair appears above the upper lip and on the chin, the voice becomes deeper. In her external appearance and her character she begins to look like a man. Therefore, when a doctor meets strikingly mannish-looking women [*muzhepodobnye zhenshchiny*], the thought always arises: isn't this a case of undeveloped ovaries, the result of a limited amount of their secretions in the blood?[20]

Deprived of their ovaries, women were seen to develop muscles, and lose their curves and their 'womanhood' (*zhenstvennost'*); doctors noted a similar transformation in women after the onset of menopause.[21]

'Thus', concluded another medical author, 'we see how important are each person's sex glands. They "make" sex, that is, thanks to them each feels oneself to be either a man or a woman and behaves accordingly.'[22] The role of the glands in the process of 'making sex', these educational materials explained, involves two distinct yet interrelated stages. Significantly, the first stage, the development of the reproductive organs or primary sex characteristics, received barely a passing mention in these works. Writers concentrated instead upon the secondary sex characteristics, explaining that these traits, which develop as a result of the hormones secreted by the sex glands beginning in puberty, serve to distinguish adult men from women.[23]

Male and female identity, in the eyes of these authors, depended almost entirely upon the secondary sex characteristics. In bodies lacking sex hormones, the physical distinctions separating the sexes would be greatly diminished, producing the mannish women and effeminate men described above: 'intersexual beings', according to several doctors.[24] Yet what is particularly significant in these works is not the physical distinctions, but the behavioral and psychological differences attributed to males and females. For not only do the glands, according to these accounts, make sex; even more importantly, they make gender by assuring that men and women 'behave accordingly'. Secondary sex characteristics, as defined by educators, include distinctions of 'body and spirit' as well as character, demeanor, mental activity, and emotion.[25] They might be 'frequently almost indefinable, but nonetheless recognized and felt'.[26] This should be recognized as one of the primary functions of these accounts: to authoritatively define for readers those indefinable characteristics, to enable them to recognize the distinctions between the sexes and consequently the appropriate conduct for members of each sex.

In their portrayal of eunuchs, medical educators had already provided a preliminary classification of 'normal' male secondary sex characteristics: the castrates they described lacked such masculine traits as bravery, energy, and enterprise. According to these accounts men were further distinguished from women by their greater logic, objectivity, even-temperedness, and resourcefulness.[27] Among the female secondary sex characteristics noted, intuition and subjectivity replaced men's cold reason.[28] Denied men's purported ability to think abstractly, beyond their own individual experience (making men better equipped to conduct research, according to one author), women by contrast were more concerned with their immediate surroundings and practical matters.

In these inventories of hormonally induced traits, frequent jumps were made from physical characteristics to the psychological or behavioral, as in this list compiled by Professor T. Iudin:

> All the features of a woman' structure – her round form, her breasts, her wide pelvis, the proportion of fat on her hips, her more passive psyche – all this is the result of the internal secretions of the ovaries; in the same way that the mustache and beard, deep voice, distinctions of the male body structure, his mental and psychological activity are the result of the internal secretions of the male sex gland.[29]

Thus even invisible differences such as passivity and activity become credibly gender specific when mixed with unmistakable physical particularities like female breasts and male facial hair.

The animal gland transplant experiments provided further corroboration of these sexual differences.[30] Sex education tracts may have depicted these attributes as self-evident and incontrovertible, but readers were not expected to take their word for it. Here science stepped in to lend a hand and corroborate their interpretation, providing the evidence for what physicians appropriately referred to as 'the dictatorship of sex': the biological basis of physical, intellectual, emotional, and behavioral distinctions between men and women.[31]

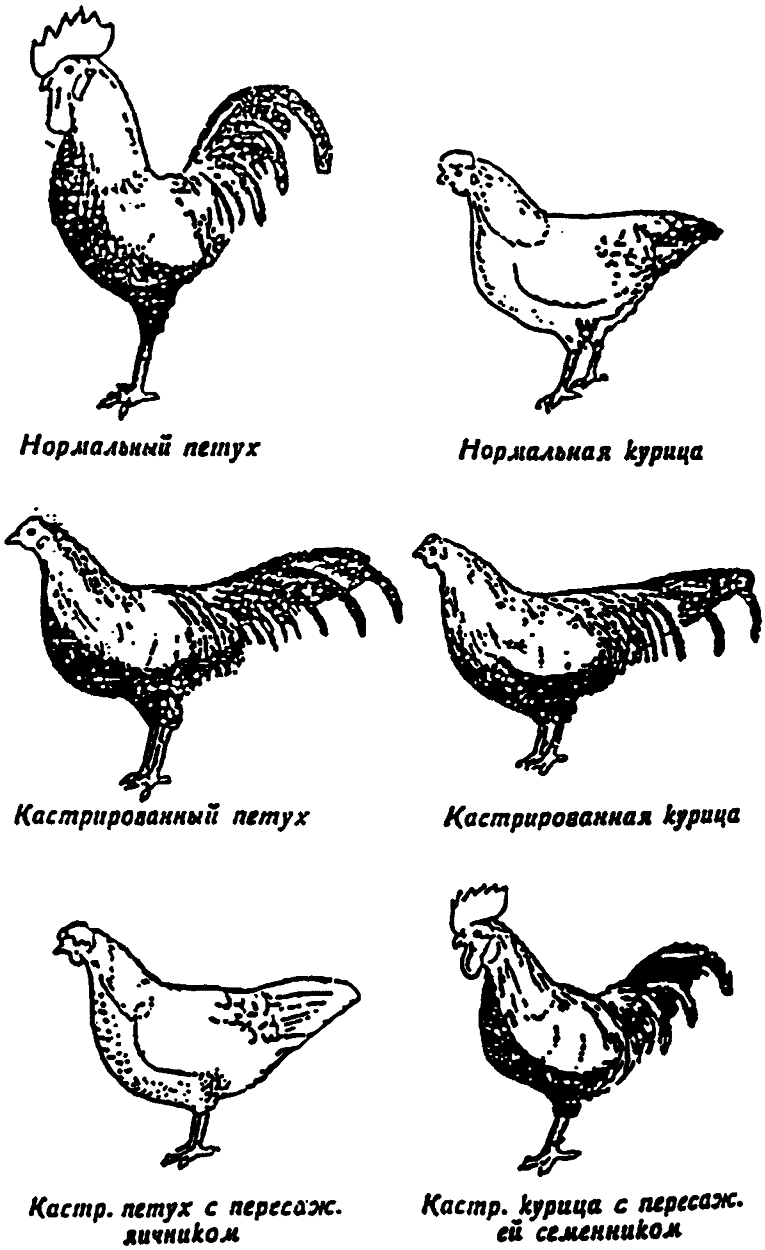
> Where in the human organism lies the reason that men grow beards and mustaches, that women have no hair on their faces, that the sex organs of man have one structure, and in woman a different structure, that between man and woman exists such a deep difference – not only physically but mentally? Only recently science answered this question. Only recently teachings about the internal secretions excited the entire scientific world and make it possible to penetrate that which earlier was considered secret.[32]

In addition to Zavadovskii's experiments with chickens and roosters, accounts also described the first sex transplant procedures, performed on rats and guinea pigs by the Viennese scientist Eugen Steinach in 1911.[33] Many accounts featured 'before and after' illustrations of the birds first published in Zavadovskii's study (Figure 7.1).[34] Presumably these images were included so that readers unable to visit the Moscow zoo might also behold 'the significance of the sex glands and the power of science'. Illustrations also served other functions. It was suggested above that the intermixing of physical attributes with qualities such as behavior lent credibility to allegations regarding the gender specificity of these 'invisible' traits. Similarly, by enabling readers to 'see' the animals (and also the eunuch's) physical transformation, illustrations made it easier to believe the behavioral changes which scientists claimed to have occurred, as in the following passage from Dr N. I. Shchukin's *Man and Woman in Sexual Life*:

> At the present time interesting experiments are done with animals. Look at Figure 1. In the upper left is a normal rooster. Beneath him is the same rooster after his sex glands were removed. He lost his former appearance: his coxcomb, beard-tuft and ornamentation disappeared. On the lower left is the same rooster after ovaries taken from a chicken were grafted under his skin. In such an unusual place the ovary continued its action and the rooster was made to look like a chicken.
>
> Three drawings of a chicken are shown at right. The one at the top is normal. The next one – after removal of the ovaries. And finally the same chicken but with sex glands from a rooster grafted under the skin.
>
> The animal's character and behavior changed along with these changes in its external appearance.
>
> From all of these experiments it is evident that **the development of secondary sex characteristics depends on the work of the sex glands.**[35]

In this example Shchukin's description of what readers were observing also served as evidence for what they could not perceive: the postulated concurrent changes in the animals' character and behavior, and the source of all three processes in the hormones. To reach these conclusions necessitated first accepting that the chicken and rooster depicted in the middle and bottom positions of the illustration were indeed one and the same as the 'normal' specimens at top. Through a similar jump in logic in the next sentence, such physical evidence also facilitated the extension of these findings to humans. Shchukin continued:

> These experiments also show that the substance secreted by the male sex gland (testes) is different from the secretions of the



Нормальный петух

Нормальная курица

Кастрированный петух

Кастрированная курица

Кастр. петух с пересаж. яичником

Кастр. курица с пересаж. ей семенником

Figure 7.1 M. M. Zavadovskii's Roosters and Chickens.

Source: M. A. Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'* (Kharkov, 1929)

> woman's ovaries, since these substances function differently. In other words, the substance secreted by male glands promotes the appearance of male secondary characteristics; the secretions of the female glands promote the appearance of female secondary traits.

This passage progresses from chickens to the ovaries of a woman without so much as a comment. The assumption that chickens and women, roosters and men, and more generally animals and humans are interchangeable was essential to educators' objectives (and not solely owing to the improbability of performing such experiments on humans). As in the educators' analyses of castration, discussion of these experiments shifted freely from animals to humans and back again. In another example, less obvious behavioral characteristics were presented as the natural human equivalents of traits found in Zavadovskii's chickens and roosters. After describing the animals' metamorphoses, the educator concluded:

> The same [transformation] is observed in humans. The castrated man becomes womanly. He loses the external signs of a man: the beard, mustache, etc. He also changes in spirit. The male cast of mind, his entire psyche is replaced by the corresponding female type of psyche (there appears femininity, love for finery, a preponderance of female interests, the inclination for gossip, garrulity, intrigues, a cunning, crafty mind, etc.).
>
> And on the contrary, if we remove a woman's ovaries and transplant the material of the male testes, the woman will become a man. She will grow a beard, mustache, develop strong muscles, and the composition of her character, psyche, and 'spirit' moreover will begin to look like the male type. There can develop in her bravery, courage, the resourcefulness normally particular to men, etc.[36]

Whereas Steinach was widely criticized by Western scientists for anthropomorphising his rats and guinea pigs by labeling them 'masculine' and 'feminine',[37] not one Russian analysis of the gland transplant procedure raised such objections. Moreover, Russian sources went far beyond simply describing animals as masculine and feminine. In the introduction to *On the Harm Done by Early Sexual Intercourse*, for instance, Dr Uspenskii informed his audience that, 'Animals are divided into *samets* and *samka* ["man" and "woman"].'[38]

The rooster with the ovarian grafts in one description of the Zavadovskii experiment was transformed 'little by little from a shouting pugnacious fighter and bawler into a modest quiet little chicken';[39] in another his loud ku-ku-re-ku became instead a 'modest cackle'.[40] And according to Dr G. Ia. Bruk, the secondary sex characteristics of humans are similar to those of animals, 'because in general a human being is indistinguishable from animals'.[41]

The animal experiments were also used to argue the hormonal basis of sexual attraction. The sounder a person's hormonal secretions, educators explained, the more masculine or feminine the person would appear, and the healthier would be that individual's sex drive and abilities. But what of the countless individuals who were less than perfect specimens of femininity or masculinity? While some such individuals turned out to be completely 'normal' in sexual matters, others were deemed decidedly 'unhealthy'. According to Professor Mendel'son:

> However, among people of such distinct structure not rarely are encountered types which not only externally but in their mental constitution are like those of the opposite sex: such through and through effeminate men thoroughly love to engage in female handwork, dress in women's clothing, want to be liked not by women but by men, moreover, they sometimes fall in love with men, seek out the male caress, feeling at the same time complete sexual indifference, often even hatred for women. Such men are distinguished from women only by the structure of their external sex organs, the majority of which are completely normal.[42]

In this introduction to the topic of homosexuality, same-sex attraction was presented as but one in a series of traits particular to these unhealthy individuals. Thus by focusing as much on deviations in secondary sex characteristics as on deviations in sexual expression, the representation of homosexuality in this literature is consistent with its portrayal of 'normal' manhood and womanhood as comprising a wide range of practices and traits not strictly sexual.

For example, (male) homosexuals, according to another source, possess a woman's mental constitution and high voice, large breasts, and wide hips. They wear corsets, lipstick and rouge, dress their hair, expose their neck and throat, and as early as childhood express a passionate interest in 'female' needlework and embroidery.[43] Lesbians, according to educators, sometimes have mustache and beard, coarse male voice, gait, and pelvic structure. They love to hunt, smoke a pipe, carouse, and embark on dangerous adventures, preferring male clothing, and often wearing their hair short.[44]

Yet the external markings of homosexuality were not always reliable, as Mendel'son himself acknowledged after concluding his list of the traits found in mannish women and effeminate men: 'not all men and women with same-sex sexual attraction look externally like representatives of the opposite sex: one encounters men with a completely correct male appearance . . .'[45] Moreover, there was little distinction between writers' descriptions of homosexual characteristics and traits and their earlier assessments of the appearance and behavior of eunuchs and other hormonally deficient men and women. In fact, in the analysis of at least one author, a simple encounter between two individuals of insufficiently expressed sexual type is enough to 'summon an explosion of same-sex passion'.[46]

How then did medical authors propose to identify homosexuals? As with 'normal' masculinity and femininity, educators considered the sex glands to be the only truly reliable detector of homosexuality. The great majority of sex education materials explained same-sex attraction as a 'biological accident', a congenital defect stemming from the presence of both male and female hormones in the gonads.[47] If, according to this theory, a man possessed more female incretory cells than male, he would be attracted to other men. Similarly, a preponderance of male over female hormones in a woman would result in lesbianism.[48] Once again, gland transplant experiments provided the evidence for this hormonal interpretation of same-sex attraction, first elaborated by Steinach in 1911. Describing that scientist's artificial creation of 'sexual deviation', Dr Vasilevskii concluded:

> Thus was achieved the transformation of male to female and female to male, moreover the behavior of the animals completely changed; the male transformed into a female, lost his courage, became meek, cared for the young, fed them and began to arouse in the real males sexual attraction, and the females transformed into males became stronger and braver, pursued the real females, mounted them, etc. Thus the secondary sex characteristics, including the type of sexual attraction, depend solely on the corresponding hormones; the male hormone, the hormones of the testes, [gives the urge] to possess a female, and the hormone of the ovaries induces the yearning for a male.[49]

Even more convincing evidence of the glandular theory of homosexuality was provided by Steinach's treatment success in 'curing' several men who suffered from this affliction. This procedure, first performed by Steinach's colleague, the urologist Robert Lichtenstern, involved the removal of the subject's defective testicles and their replacement by a testis taken from a 'normal' man.[50]

While a few isolated medical voices, most prominently the neuropsychiatrist V. M. Bekhterev, continued to argue that homosexuality was an environmentally induced condition and hence could be acquired through seduction,[51] the majority of Russian medical educators in the 1920s subscribed to the hormonal theory of homosexuality. Given their interpretation of homosexuality as stemming from congenital aberration, these physicians strongly supported the decriminalization of consensual adult homosexual acts which had been codified in the 1922 RSFSR Criminal Code.[52]

> All the above leads us to a completely new view of homosexuality. This it turns out is not a sign of perversion of taste or character, but a result of a definite illness, a definite irregularity [*nepravilnost'*] in the structure of the system of internal secretions, especially in the structure of the sex gland. From this it follows that homosexuals should not be punished as debauchers, but cured, as sick people, with the help of an operation. Furthermore, even recently the English poet Oscar Wilde, convicted of same-sex love, paid for this with a long prison sentence, depriving the world of a wonderful poet.[53]

Yet significantly, by the time Russian authors began to write about this topic, West European medical and scientific communities had almost unanimously rejected Steinach's theory, and especially his claims about curing homosexuality through glandular transplant.[54] How are we to understand, then, educators' persistent references to a glandular interpretation of homosexuality?[55]

The often-noted lag in the reception of foreign scientific ideas in Russia may have been partly responsible for the strong support this theory continued to enjoy among sex educators even at the end of the decade. Nonetheless, I would argue that far more important than the scientific legitimacy of this theory was its role in the sex educators' project: the hormonal interpretation of homosexuality served to emphasize the importance of the glands (and hence the need to take care of them), and to pathologize 'unmanly' and 'unwomanly' behavior. Of course, one justification for discussions of homosexuality in educational materials was to confirm the biological 'correctness' of heterosexuality, and consequently the appropriate forms of heterosexual sex to be specified by qualified experts. Yet to those educators who subscribed to a hormonal interpretation of sexual attraction, same-sex love was not considered especially dangerous to the general population, since, as a developmental defect, it could not be caught or inherited. Thus the topic of homosexuality appeared in their analyses of the glands less out of the need to convince readers to refrain from this kind of sex, than to emphasize the pathological nature of all forms of unmanliness and unwomanliness and any sort of weakening or transgressing of gender roles.

Although educators were unwilling to entertain the notion of gender difference as culturally (rather than biologically) produced, they nonetheless identified several aspects of modern civilization as contributing to the deviation from 'natural' gender roles and the laws of attraction. Contemporary culture, they argued, bombarded the senses with artificial stimuli, unnaturally and dangerously heightening sexual feeling to a degree unknown to either 'primitive man' or 'savage peoples'.[56] Educators considered the modern city, teeming with indecent and unhealthy temptations, to be an especially pernicious influence. They also condemned 'the dubious repertoire of certain theaters', modern cinema and films, erotic and pornographic literature, as well as alcohol, spicy food, too much meat, or a sedentary lifestyle.[57]

Yet in their estimation modern civilization's most 'artificial' invention, and the best indicator of how far culture had deviated from the natural order, was the coquette, who drew upon all the tools at her disposal to captivate the opposite sex.[58] Whatever progress made by the Revolution towards the eradication of this female type had been seriously undermined by the conditions of the New Economic Policy (NEP); accompanying the revival of the market, writers explained, was the emergence of the Nepman, whose *raison d'être* (besides the accumulation of capital) was the pursuit of sensual, inevitably depraved, pleasure. Soon, as Dr Tkachenko elaborated, a 'special type of woman-*samka*' again appeared in the cities to satisfy these licentious demands:

> with her special rotting attributes, methods, flirtations and coquettishness, her garish dress and cosmetics, [looking like] a

> cheap doll bearing the sign: 'if you don't trick them, you won't sell it' ['*ne obmanesh' – ne prodash'*], and her shameless, open beckoning to the male of the species [*samets*].[59]

Here is one instance where a comparison between humans and the animal world, through the use of the terms for the female and male of the species (*samka* and *samets*), carried extremely negative connotations. And yet, as these works had previously asserted, in nature males assumed the active role and females the passive in the mating process; the 'shameless beckoning' of the males by females which Tkachenko here attributed to animals was in fact precisely what educators found amiss in human interactions. During the mid-1920s, as Eric Naiman and others have recently shown, this shapely, painted, quasi-prostitute became a pervasive symbol of the ideological taint of the NEP through her connection to the pre-Communist past, her status as a commodity, and her overt sexuality.[60] To medical educators writing about the glands, the overt nature of this woman's sexuality was less troubling than its particularly masculine quality; the coquette upset nature's sexual order through her active pursuit of men. In this respect her 'bourgeois' cosmetics, attire, and bearing served as instruments of her predatory transgression.

Health writers found the reappearance of such women after the Revolution extremely discomforting, evidence of society's pollution by the reviled past. According to Commissar Semashko, the explanation for this contamination lay in the population's psychological unpreparedness for a restructuring of everyday life, which was 'lagging behind' the country's economic reconstruction, already underway.[61] To illustrate this point, he cited an observation made by Chernyshevskii concerning the different requirements for a wife in diverse layers of society. Nobles sought such physical evidence of 'good blood', as small hands and feet, an hourglass figure, languishing eyes, frailty, tenderness and sensitivity.[62] Yet to a peasant, such a mate would have been both impractical and unsuitable; he required a robust, healthy wife, capable of arduous physical labor. Thus, Semashko elaborated, every class draws its conception of beauty from the conditions of life, labor and daily experience in which it is located, in relation to its class interests. How then should the re-emergence of the coquette after the Revolution be understood? Semashko asked his audience:

> Have you not had occasion to observe in factories, enterprises, in villages such peasant girls and female workers, who tried in their external appearance to look like these pure-bloods, like these noble girls? Hasn't the red ink in your offices disappeared surprisingly quickly, as it once did in mine, as a result of using it to color lips? This method of old lives still not only in our offices, but in the factory, enterprise, in the village. And instead of female workers and peasants burning with hate for these former sickly noble girls, they imitate them. It would seem that each woman worker and peasant should be morally nauseated by these remnants of the old mode of life, and instead they frequently imitate them.[63]

Here the coquette figured as both symptom and cause of the present's contamination by the past; responsibility was shifted away from society (which, according to Semashko's own analysis, had previously created the demands for certain kinds of mates) and onto these women themselves. To achieve the psychological preconditions necessary for the successful construction of a new lifestyle required that the old one, here represented as the painted woman, be destroyed. The weapon proposed by Semashko for this excision was hatred: 'When we ignite this sacred hatred in the breast of each young woman worker, male worker, woman peasant, each laborer of our Union, then we will see around us a mass of opportunities in order to build a healthy, happy, radiant lifestyle, on the site of the old, putrid, accursed mode of life.' In practical terms, Semashko's solution necessitated the inculcation of self-hatred in these women. Other authors, such as Dr Glezer, agreed:

> It is understandable that for a proletarian woman, an equal worker who, like a man, has the right to life and its happiness, it is completely indecent to wear lipstick and powder, to get manicures and think only about clothes ... She doesn't need to dress herself up in the costume of a coquette to attract a man. She will find a friend-man, to continue the race and share struggle and labor.[64]

Ultimately, the construction of a new mode of life also required the rejection of this type of woman by men. Yet in both of these analyses, men were absolved of any responsibility in desiring, and hence contributing to, the reappearance of the coquette after the

Revolution. In a 1924 lecture on the sex question later published under the title 'Is Femininity Necessary?', Semashko explained the primary reason behind male exculpation.[65] The lecture began with Semashko recalling the dozens of notes he received at such venues, all written in a feminine hand and asking the same question:[66]

> You speak about equality between the sexes, about lack of force and comradely relationships of men and women, you stigmatize every form of artificiality, pomaded and painted woman, as a rude, coarse, sexual provocation. But meanwhile even Komsomol members and Communists cling to precisely these women and run from women-comrades.

To answer, Semashko described two extreme types observable among young women, both worthy of condemnation. The first was that remnant of the reviled past, the parasitic aristocratic lady, with her red lips, eye makeup, and hourglass figure. This 'looking toward the past', he maintained, deserved the most severe condemnation, especially by the women workers and peasants prone to imitate her.

Yet the second extreme type was far worse. This was the 'masculine' woman – who had 'completely lost her feminine traits and transformed herself into a man . . . with disheveled, frequently dirty hair, a cigarette between her lips (like a man), deliberately gruff manners (like a man), deliberately rude voice (like a man), etc.' The mannish woman who had 'exterminated all her purely female spiritual qualities' was 'incorrect', Semashko asserted, because 'woman at the very least in the present and the near future has her own social function and her special traits of character.' And to illustrate the biological basis of these feminine traits (and hence the abnormality of the manly woman) he again turned to Steinach's animal gland transplant experiments. Semashko explained that the dramatic physical and psychological changes experienced by the animals – the 'masculinization' of the female specimens and the 'feminization' of the males – 'demonstrated that the female constitution, designed for the function of giving birth, marks woman with the stamp of femininity, and the female qualities of tenderness, attention, spirituality, gentleness'. The example of nursing confirmed this conclusion. Whereas men and women could be found in the 'treatment' professions of doctor or medic, the 'caring' profession of nursing was almost exclusively female. This, Semashko declared, had come about as a result of natural selection, since caring was a predominantly feminine trait. He then asked:

> Do we need to necessarily destroy femininity in the name of sexual equality and display this destruction even in its external form: brusque manner, rude voice, etc.? We don't have to: it's still unclear what type of human being will result in the future. Without a doubt, it will inherit the best aspects of the male and female character. But for now femininity in this sense of the word suits us . . . That which is the best in woman – and this which will remain regardless of the attempts to poison it – needs to be preserved in woman. Vulgar equality of the sexes only profanes a correct and good idea.

For this same reason Komsomol and Party members were 'instinctively' attracted to 'the painted dolls who exaggerated their female traits, overemphasizing them above all else': the young men could not find this femininity in the mannish 'blue stockings', the name, Semashko explained, which had formerly been applied to 'masculinized nihilists'. Thus ultimately, men's sexual class transgressions were forgivable since they were only fulfilling their biological role by evincing sexual attraction to the 'real' females of the species, that is, those with the proper secondary sex traits.[67] The aberrations of contemporary women had two possible manifestations. The first was the coquette, whose sexual aggression was intrinsically linked with the class contamination of the Tsarist past. Yet as Semashko and the other authors cited in this study concluded, the manly woman, transgressing against nature itself, posed the graver threat. Since, in their analyses, physical appearance translated into behavior, on the most practical level the 'degendering' of women would deprive the country of the traits only they had the ability to fulfill.

Semashko returned to this theme in a 1925 *Izvestiia* editorial entitled 'How Not to Write About the Sexual Question', criticizing his fellow Party comrades for their lack of understanding of biology and especially the role of the endocrine glands.[68] In particular he singled out Martin Liadov's thesis that man must overcome the tendency to view woman as a representative of the opposite sex rather than as a comrade. Semashko responded:

> That one needs to relate to woman first of all like a comrade – this is the sacred truth but that you have to destroy in yourself

> your relationship to another person as to a member of the opposite sex – what is that? The prophecy of a monk?

In hedging on the issue of sexual equality by leaving it to be resolved until some time in the distant future, Semashko ignored the full political implications of his biologically based analysis.

Given the Health Commissariat's emphasis on prophylaxis and its environmentalist explanation of disease, such a strictly biologistic interpretation of human behavior is especially significant. Indeed, little attention was devoted in this literature to the possibility that environment caused sexual difference. Even those few authors who acknowledged the impact of socioeconomic factors on the development of gender difference ultimately championed the dominance of biology over environment. As Dr Bruk wrote:

> Moreover, as in a majority of mammals, in humans there exist secondary sex differences in the character and behavior of man and woman. Of course different types of female education, the incorrect upbringing which woman received here before the Revolution and still receives abroad, prevent to a certain degree the correct determination of the character differences separating man and woman. But nonetheless these differences exist and will remain, even if a woman were to receive exactly the same upbringing and education as a man.[69]

Bruk did not consider the possibility that equality of experience would eradicate behavioral differences; his point was rather that obstacles to women's education had somehow artificially hindered the natural and proper (but nonetheless distinct) path of female development. It is as if the belief in a fundamental difference between the sexes was such an embedded, integral part of these doctors' world view that even those who subscribed to an environmentalist interpretation of social development would have been incapable of applying this theory to the distinctions between men and women. Men and women, in the understanding of these writers, seemed to belong to related yet distinct species. Were all social obstacles to equal development removed, basic differences between the two would nonetheless inevitably and necessarily remain, as the endocrinologist Nemilov concluded: 'We don't know a person, as such, we know only man and woman.'[70]

Notes

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1 Dr A. Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia polovaia zhizn' muzhchiny i zhenshchiny* (Khar'kov, 1926), p. 20.

2 Professor T. I. Iudin, *Polovoe vlechenie i nenormal'nosti polovogo povedeniia* (Moscow, 1928), p. 17.

3 M. M. Zavadovskii, *Pol i razvitie ego priznakov* (Moscow, 1922) and *Pol zhivotnykh i ego prevrashchenie (mekhanika razvitiia pola)* (Moscow, 1923); 'Problema pola v biologicheskoi postanovke', in V. F. Zelenin, ed., *Polovoi vopros v svete nauchnogo znaniia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), pp. 12–17.

4 Dr B. A. Ivanovskii, *Polovaia zhizn' i fizkul'tura* (Moscow, 1928), pp. 11–14.

5 On the history of Soviet endocrinology, see my '"What Everyone Should Know About Sex": Gender, Sexual Enlightenment, and the Politics of Health in Revolutionary Russia, 1918–1931' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1998), ch. 2; on endocrinology in an international context, see Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archeology of Sex Hormones* (New York, 1994).

6 Two important recent works have offered alternative analyses of the endocrine glands in relation to abstinence and rejuvenation. See Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, 1997), ch. 4; and Mikhail Zolotonosov, 'Masturbanizatsiia. "Erogennye zony" sovetskoi kul'tury 1920–1930-x godov', *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 11 (1991), pp. 93 ff.

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8 D. I. Lass, *Zdorovaia polovaia zhizn'* (Moscow, 1929), p. 8.

9 Prof. P. G. Bakaleinikov, *Polovoe znanie* (Leningrad, 1927), p. 3.

10 See discussions in Dr O. Feigin, *Polovoe sozrevanie i polovoe vospitanie* (Leningrad, 1927), pp. 7–10; Dr N. I. Shchukin, *Muzhchina i zhenshchina v polovoi zhizni* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1928), pp. 19–20; and Dr Ia. I. Zdravomyslov, *Voprosy polovoi zhizni* (Leningrad, 1926), p. 48.

11 Dr B. S. Sigal, *Polovaia zhizn' rabochei molodezhi* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), p. 22; Dr L. M. Vasilevskii, *K zdorovomy polovomu bytu* (Moscow, 1926), p. 4.

12 Dr L. M. Vasilevskii, *Polovye izvrashcheniia* (Moscow, 1924), p. 35.

13 Dr N. Donichev, *Zdorovaia i nezdorovaia polovaia zhizn'* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1930), pp. 8–11; Dr Ia. S. Shapiro, *Polovoe vospitanie detei v sem'e* (Moscow), p. 6; Dr G. Rozenblium, *Kakoe znachenie imeet brak dlia zdorov'ia liudei* (Khar'kov, 1926), p. 11.

14 Dr A. Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia polovaia zhizn' muzhchin i zhenshchin* (Khar'kov, 1926), p. 18; Dr N. Shvarts, 'Biologicheskii ocherk', in *Polovoi vopros*, p. 34; Dr B. A. Ivanovskii, *Polovaia zhizn'i fizkul'tura* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1928), p. 11; Dr G. Rozenblium, *Kakoe znachenie imeet brak dlia zdorov'ia liudei* (Khar'kov, 1926), p. 11.

15 Dr G. Ia. Bruk, *Chto takoe polovoe vlechenie* (Moscow and Leningrad 1929), pp. 59–60.

16 F. Berman, *Sputnik sanlektora* (1921), pp. 22, 196; Sigal, *Polovaia zhizn' rabochei molodezhi*, p. 18; Feigin, *Polovoe sozrevanie*, p. 10; Dr L. I. Faingol'd, *Polovoe sozrevanie cheloveka* (Odessa, 1927), p. 8; Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia*, p. 19.

17 Ivanovskii, *Polovaia zhizn' i fizkul'tura*, pp. 11–14.

18 Bakaleinikov, *Polovoe znanie*, p. 6.

19 Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia*, pp. 19–20.

20 Ivanovskii, *Polovaia zhizn' i fizkul'tura*, pp. 11–14.

21 Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia*, p. 20; Shchukin, *Muzhchina i zhenshchina*, pp. 23–4; Rozenblium, *Kakoe znachenie imeet brak*, p. 11; Dr M. A. Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'* (Khar'kov, 1929), p. 33.

22 Bruk, *Chto takoe polovoe vlechenie*, p. 74.

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24 Dr Ia. D. Golomb, *Polovaia zhizn' normal'naia i nenormal'naia* (Odessa, 1926), p. 11; Prof. M. Nestrukh, *Polovoe vlechenie v prirode* (Moscow, 1924), p. 91.

25 Shapiro, *Polovoe vospitanie detei v sem'e*, p. 5.

26 Dr L. Ia. Iakobzon, 'Liubov', obshchestvo i kul'tura', in *Voprosy pola* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1929), p. 55.

27 Golomb, *Polovaia zhizn'*, p. 11; Prof. G. P. Sakharov, 'Vnutrenniaia sekretsiia i omolozhenie', in N. P. Iordanskii, ed., *Biosotsial'naia priroda polovoi zhizni cheloveka* (Moscow, 1930), p. 66.

28 Mendel'son, *Nervnaia sistema i polovaia zhizn* (Leningrad, 1929), p. 8.

29 Iudin, *Polovoe vlechenie*, p. 17.

30 Ivanovskii, *Polovaia zhizn'i fizkul'tura*, pp. 11–14; Dr K. P. Veselovskaia, *Pedologicheskie osnovy polovogo vospitaniia* (Moscow, 1928), pp. 16–18; Prof. G. N. Sorokhtin, *Obshchie osnovy polovogo vospitaniia dlia pedologov, vrachei, i pedagogov* (Moscow, 1930), pp. 7–9; Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'*, pp. 33–4.

31 Kaminskii, *Polovaia zhizn' i fizicheskaia kul'tura*, p. 13; A. V. Nemilov, *Biologicheskaia tragediia zhenshchin* (Moscow, 1930), p. 29.

32 Timofeev, *V chem proiavliaetsia*, p. 11.

33 V. A. Khachatrian, *Polovye otkloneniia i polovoe vospitanie. Onanizm i bor'ba s nim* (Tbilisi, 1929), pp. 10–11; Veselovskaia, p. 16; Kaminskii, p. 13; Sorokhtin, p. 7. On Steinach's life and scientific work, see Chandak Sengoopta, 'Glands of Life: Eugen Steinach, Rejuvenation, and Experimental Endocrinology in the Early Twentieth Century' (unpublished paper); Eugen Steinach, *Sex and Life: Forty Years of Biological and Medical Experiments* (New York, 1940).

34 From Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'*, p. 35.

35 Emphasis in the original. Shchukin, *Muzhchina i zhenshchina*, p. 24.
36 Tkachenko, *O polovom voprose*, pp. 37–8.
37 Alexander Lipschitz, *The Internal Secretions of the Sex Glands: the Problem of the 'Puberty Gland'* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 298, 365. I am grateful for this information to Chandak Sengoopta. See his 'Glandular Politics: Endocrinology, Sexual Orientation, and Emancipation in Early Twentieth Century Central Europe' (unpublished paper), 27.
38 Uspenskii, *O vrede rannikh polovykh snoshenii*, p. 4. *Samets* and *samka* are the generic words for male and female of a species.
39 Bakaleinikov, *Polovoe znanie*, p. 5.
40 Khachatrian, *Polovye otkloneniia*, p. 11.
41 Bruk, *Chto takoe polovoe vlechenie*, p. 61.
42 Mendel'son, 'Polovye izvrashcheniia v svete sovremennoi nauki', *Gigiena i zdorov'e rabochei sem'i*, no. 23(30) (1924), p. 4.
43 Vasilevskii, *Polovye izvrashcheniia*, pp. 37–8.
44 Ibid.
45 Mendel'son, 'Polovye izvrashcheniia', p. 4.
46 Dr M. Lemberg, *Chto neobkhodimo znat' o polovom voprose* (Leningrad, 1925), p. 10.
47 See Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'*, pp. 32–3; Golomb, *Polovaia zhizn'*, pp. 29–30; Mendel'son, 'Polovye izvrashcheniia', no. 24, p. 2; 'Polovye razlichiia', no. 11, 14.
48 Bakaleinikov, *Polovoe znanie*, p. 16.
49 Vasilevskii, *Polovye izvrashcheniia*, pp. 43–4. See Eugen Steinach, 'Pubetätsdrhsen und Zwitterbildung', *Archiv für Entwicheklungsmechanik*, no. 42 (1917), pp. 307–32.
50 Significantly, Russian accounts of this procedure neglect to mention that the woman with whom the subject had sex after the operation (and on many other occasions) was a prostitute, or that the primary reason for the removal of his testicles was tuberculosis; both factors were discussed in German accounts. See Sengoopta, 'Glandular Politics', pp. 7–8. For other Russian accounts see Nestrukh, *Polovoe vlechenie v prirode*, p. 96; V. P. Protopopov, 'Sovremennoe sostoianie voprosa o sushchnosti i proiskhozhdenii gomoseksualizma', *Nauchnaia meditsina*, no. 10 (1922), p. 61; Mendel'son, 'Polovye izvrashcheniia', p. 5; Golomb, *Polovaia zhizn'*, pp. 28, 30; Iudin, *Polovoe vlechenie*, p. 21.
51 V. M. Bekhterev, 'Razvitie polovogo vlecheniia's tochki zreniia refleksologii', *Russkii vrach*, nos. 29–32, 33–6 (1918); 'Polovye ukloneniia i izvrashcheniia v svete refleksologii', *Voprosy izucheniia i vospitaniia lichnosti*, no. 4–5 (1922); 'O polovom izvrashchenii, kak osoboi ustanovke polovykh refleksov', in I. D. Simonov, ed., *Polovoi vopros v shkole i v zhizni* (Leningrad, 1927). Sex educators who support the Bekhterev interpretation of homosexuality include: Sorokhtin, *Obshchie osnovy polovogo vospitaniia*, pp. 21–2, 27; Khachatrian, *Polovye otkloneniia*, pp. 50–1; and Shapiro, *Polovoe vospitanie detei v sem'e*, pp. 29–30.
52 On the 1922 code, see Prof. A. A. Zhizhilenko, *Polovye prestupleniia (St. st. 166–171 Ugolovnogo Kodeksa)* (Moscow, 1924), pp. 12–16, 19–25; P. I. Liublinskii, *Prestupleniia v oblasti polovykh otkloneniiakh* (Moscow and

Leningrad, 1925), pp. 122–3. On the history of homosexuality in the Tsarist and early Soviet periods, see Daniel Healy, 'The Russian Revolution and the Decriminalisation of Homosexuality', *Revolutionary Russia* v. 6 (1993); and Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca, 1992). It is important to note, however, that at least in the early 1920s, legal harassment of homosexuals continued in other forms. See Daniel Healy, 'Constructing the Soviet Pervert: Same-sex Desire, Medicine, and Law in Russia, 1917–1929' (unpublished paper), pp. 2, 14.

53 Vasilevskii, *Polovye izvrashcheniia*, p. 46.

54 Specifically, opposition arose around Steinach's contention that the testes removed from homosexual subjects revealed upon histological examination cells strikingly similar to those of the ovaries. No other scientists were ever able to find these cells in the testicular specimens and in an extensive review of several studies in 1923, the psychiatrist Kurt Blum concluded that Steinach's glandular theory of homosexuality could not be confirmed. By the end of the decade surgeons no longer performed the procedure, and Steinach himself had redirected his professional attention elsewhere. Sengoopta, 'Glandular politics', pp. 8–9.

55 Curiously, the rejection of Steinach's theory by Western scientists and physicians was ignored even by the minority of Russian educators who favored an alternative explanation of homosexuality; there appeared only several vague allusions to a 'lack of consensus' on this issue among specialists.

56 Uspenskii, *Polovaia zhizn' i ee otkloneniia*, p. 26; Lemberg, *Chto neobkhodimo znat'*, p. 4.

57 Ibid.; L. Mandels, 'Ozdorovlenie polovogo byta', *Gigiena i zdorov'e rabochei i krest'ianskoi sem'i*, no. 2 (January 1927), p. 10.

58 Sakharov, 'Chelovecheskii polovoi dimorfizm', in *Biosotsial'naia priroda polovoi zhizni cheloveka*, p. 73; Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'*, p. 36; Golomb, *Polovaia zhizn'*, p. 10.

59 Tkachenko, *O polovom voprose*, pp. 17–18.

60 Eric Naiman, 'Revolutionary Anorexia: NEP as Female Disorder', *Slavic and East European Journal* v. 37, no. 3 (1993), pp. 309–10, 313. For an alternative reading, see Spencer Golub, *The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre and Memory in Twentieth Century Russia* (Iowa City, 1994), ch. 7.

61 Semashko, *Novyi byt i polovoi vopros* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926), p. 30.

62 Ibid., pp. 30–1.

63 Ibid., p. 31.

64 Glezer, *Polovaia zhizn'*, p. 36.

65 N. A. Semashko, 'Nuzhna li "zhenstvennost' "?' *Molodaia gvardiia* v. 6 (1924), pp. 205–6.

66 Anne Gorsuch describes similar concerns in the Komsomol. See her 'Flappers and Foxtrotters: the Soviet Youth in the "Roaring Twenties" ', *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 1102 (March 1994), p. 18; and '"A Woman is Not a Man": the Culture of Gender and Generation in Soviet Russia, 1921–1928', *Slavic Review* v. 55, no. 3 (Fall 1996), pp. 658–60.

67 Others may not have agreed: propaganda was also directed at soldiers, [male] Komsomol, and Party members who married outside their class. See Mark von Hagen, 'Military Service, Soviet Citizenship, and Gender Politics' (unpublished paper).

68 Semashko, 'Kak ne nado pisat' o polovom voprose', *Izvestiia* (1 January 1925), p. 5.

69 Bruk, *Chto takoe polovoe vlechenie*, pp. 64–5.

70 Nemilov, *Biologicheskaia tragediia*, p. 39.

8

Modernization or Neo-traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism

Terry Martin

In his 1913 pamphlet, *Marxism and the Nationalities Question*, Stalin began his definition of a nation as follows:[1]

> What is a nation?
>
> A nation is, above all, a community, a definite community of people.
>
> *This community is not racial, nor is it tribal.* The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Bretons, Teutons, and so on. The same can be said of the English, Germans and others, who consolidated into nations out of different races and tribes.
>
> *Thus, a nation is not racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.* [my italics]

This was an unexceptional, orthodox statement of contemporary Marxist thought. European Marxists were then contesting the growing racialist and primordial ethnic thinking that justified both imperialism and the growing nationalist movements of Eastern Europe. In opposition to the widespread contemporary belief in the historic depth of national identity, Marxists asserted that nations were fundamentally modern constructs.[2] In Stalin's words: 'A nation is not merely a historical category, but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism.'[3] After October 1917, Soviet nationalities policy would be premised on this belief that nations were not primordial entities, but rather inevitable by-products of modernization.[4]

In 1938, the Communist Party's official theoretical journal, *Bolshevik*, published an article, 'The Magnificent Russian People', which epitomized a radically different understanding of nations:[5]

> The history of the Great Russian people is the history of its heroic battles for independence and freedom against innumerable enemies, conquerors and interventionists, including 'German elements' ... In this difficult battle, full of dangers, the magnificent Russian people multiplied and developed its remarkable qualities as the People-Fighter [*narod-borets*] and People-Freedom Lover [*narod-svobodoliubets*] ...

The author then went on to recount the defeat of thirteenth-century 'German elements', the Teutonic Knights, by Alexander Nevsky and concluded his description with a hymn to the primordial essence of Russianness:[6]

> The people is immortal. The military capabilities of the Slavic warriors [*druzhina*] and the courage, endurance, resourcefulness and resoluteness of the Russian fighters [*voinov*] – all these qualities have been cultivated in the Russian people.

This article exemplified a dramatic turn in the mid-1930s, away from the former Soviet view of nations as fundamentally modern constructs, and towards an emphasis on the deep primordial roots of modern nations.[7]

This dramatic reversal in the Party's official theoretical approach to nationality warrants further analysis. This is especially the case since such reversals were characteristic of the 1930s, and so understanding them might shed some light on the social and political nature of Stalinism. To that end, I will first present an explanation for the Soviet turn towards primordial nationality in the 1930s. I will then link this argument to one of the major concerns of this book: the relationship between the Soviet Union and modernity.

This relationship is actually quite an old concern. The best American scholarship of the 1950s identified modernization as the fundamental sociological trend characterizing Stalinist society.[8] These scholars naturally pointed to the modernizing goals that the Soviet leadership consciously sought to achieve: industrialization, urbanization, secularization, universal education and literacy. More powerfully, they also pointed to a number of trends that contradicted the

Bolsheviks' original goals, but that were characteristic of all modernizing societies: the emergence of a hereditary class system, lower birth rates, authoritarian industrial discipline, middle-class respectability. Quite understandably, they interpreted these trends as an unavoidable consequence of the Soviet Union's transition from traditional to modern industrial society.

In the early 1980s, however, several sociologists began to draw attention to the prominence and persistence of traditional pre-modern practices in Communist societies.[9] Modernization was supposed to involve the transition from ascribed status groups (*sosloviia*) to economic classes.[10] Nevertheless, many characteristics of status societies seemed to thrive under Communism: a hierarchical distribution of privileges and information according to political status; the importance of ranks, titles, uniforms, honors and other status symbols. Likewise, modernization theory predicted the replacement of personalistic ties with bureaucratic ones. Yet, the role of informal and personal relationships also appeared to intensify in Communist societies: *blat*, *tolkachi*, patron–client networks, paternalistic 'big men' (*vozhdi*) and their submissive petitioners.[11] These sociologists argued that the distinctive quality of Communist societies was the coexistence of modern and traditional elements. They coined a new term to describe such societies: neo-traditionalism.[12]

Nationality is an excellent test-case for evaluating the modernization and neo-traditional paradigms for understanding Stalinist society. Almost all contemporary students of nationalism agree with the original Bolshevik premise that the emergence of nations and nationalism is a consequence of the transition from traditional to modern society. They do not associate that transition exclusively, as Lenin and Stalin did, with the rise of capitalism. Most would prefer to give independent weight to such factors as the growth of centralized states, ideology and industrialization.[13] I will focus initially on the characteristic role of industrialization in the emergence of nations and nationalism, since industrialization was the central modernizing process of the Stalinist era.

Ernest Gellner's theory of nationality as an inevitable consequence of the social organization of industrial society provides a highly useful orientation for thinking about the Bolshevik turn towards primordial nationality in the 1930s. Therefore, I will briefly summarize his theory.[14] Gellner argues that pre-industrial states lack the sociological prerequisites for the emergence of modern nations. Such states are divided vertically into a series of isolated village-based cultures. Villagers share a common culture that structures their daily life. All communication – gestures, actions, words – are readily understood within this mutually shared cultural context. These village-based cultures can be described as primordial, rooted, 'thick'. They are also pre-national. Peasants typically identify themselves either as locals or by their faith, not by nationality. Pre-modern states are likewise divided horizontally between the peasantry and the ruling estates. These estates do have a state-wide organization and share a common identity. However, this identity is not a national, but rather a corporate one. The clergy usually serve a universalist faith. Members of the nobility, which is often multiethnic in composition, emphasize their estate identity and deny any common national culture with the debased peasantry. Nationality, therefore, has no place in the pre-industrial state.[15]

In Gellner's model, industrialization destroys the primordial village-based folk cultures by uprooting the peasantry and transplanting them into an urban industrial environment where they lack a common cultural context. In order for these newly urbanized peasants to communicate with one another in a way that will allow an industrial society to function efficiently, a new common culture must be created. The state insures the emergence of a common, high culture (that is, a written, codified culture) by establishing a universal system of education. Gellner emphasizes that no industrial state has functioned without one. The new high culture is not nearly so deep and all-encompassing as the old folk cultures. It consists of no more than 'certain shared qualifications: literacy, numeracy, basic work habits and social skills, familiarity with basic technical and social skills'.[16] It is constructed, state-wide, 'thin'. Its dispersion throughout the territory of a given state creates a modern nation.

Gellner's key insight, then, is that modern national cultures are not extensions or distillations of pre-existing village cultures. Rather, their emergence presupposes the prior destruction of those primordial folk cultures. This is the essence of the modern sociological interpretation of nationality. It was shared by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s and articulated by Stalin in the passages quoted in the opening paragraph.

However, there is a second, much more widespread modern interpretation of nationality, the one subscribed to by nationalists themselves. Gellner notes that 'generally speaking, nationalist ideology suffers from pervasive false consciousness. Its myths invert reality: it claims to defend folk culture while in fact it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous mass society.'[17] Nations are in reality the consequence of the social organization of industrial society, Gellner argues, but they are perceived by nationalists as the embodiment, awakening and essence of ancient village-based folk cultures. For this reason, nationalists place great emphasis on accidental and often invented elements of folk culture that survive to become part of the modern high culture. It is this primordial interpretation of nations, however, that by and large captured popular imaginations and made nationalism the strongest political force of the modern era.

To sum up, Gellner's analysis provides us with two useful insights. First, the policies that Stalin implemented to an unprecedented degree – rapid industrialization, the uprooting of the peasantry, high levels of social mobility, the establishment of a standardized universal system of education – typically lead to the formation of a shared high culture and a shared national identity, Gellner's definition of a nation-state. Gellner's theory also predicts that due to uneven industrialization, isolated and culturally distinct regions will often fail to assimilate with the new state-wide high culture. Such failures to assimilate result in a distinct regionally based high culture and separatist nationalism.[18] In both cases, however, the exact same process occurs: industrialization destroys village-based folk cultures and necessitates the formation of a new high culture, which in turn serves as the basis for a shared national identity. In modern industrial society, high culture and national identity coincide.

Second, Gellner's analysis emphasizes that there are two modern interpretations of nationality: the sociological view of nations as modern constructs and the popular understanding of nations as primordial. The former view, as we have seen, informed the Soviet nationalities policy in the 1920s, while the latter view came to predominate in the 1930s. The Bolsheviks, it would seem, went from being students of nationalism to nationalists. This was ironic, since the original Soviet nationalities policy was a strategy designed to accomplish the opposite process: to move the Soviet population from the popular nationalist understanding of nations to the Bolsheviks' own sociological concept.

Such a policy was naturally a highly ambitious endeavor. I will briefly outline the logic of the original Soviet nationalities policy, since this intervention profoundly influenced the outcome of Stalinist modernization.[19] The strength of nationalism as a mobilizing force during the Revolution and Civil War had both surprised and disturbed the Bolshevik leadership. Party leaders differed on how best to address the nationalities question. One faction, led by Piatakov and Bukharin, argued that with the abolition of capitalism in Russia, nationalism and national identities would disappear. Therefore, the Party should give no support to the existence of separate national identities.[20] Lenin and Stalin both disagreed and argued instead that the Bolsheviks' own modernizing policies would result in a short-term strengthening of national identity.[21] In other words, they accepted Gellner's substitution of industrialism for capitalism as the primary force generating national identity.

However, it was impossible for any Bolshevik to accept Gellner's contention that national identity, as the shared idiom of a modern industrial society, would almost always be a stronger force than class identity. The Bolsheviks viewed nationalism much more instrumentally. Nationalism was a uniquely dangerous mobilizing ideology because it had the potential to forge an all-class alliance for national goals. It did this by presenting legitimate class grievances in an inappropriate national form. It could do this, of course, because of the popular primordial understanding of nationalism. Gellner would later parody this Marxist argument as the 'Wrong-Address Theory' of nationalism: 'Just as extreme Shi'ite Muslims hold that Archangel Gabriel made a mistake, delivering the Message to Mohammed when it was intended for Ali, so Marxists basically like to think that the spirit of history or human consciousness made a terrible boob. The wakening message was intended for classes, but by some terrible postal error was delivered to nations.'[22]

The Bolsheviks believed this danger could be averted by a strategy that would depoliticize national identity. Paradoxically, this strategy involved the systematic promotion of all 'forms' of national identity that did not conflict with the existence of a unitary, socialist state. In practice, this meant support for the following national forms: national languages, national elites, national territories and national cultures. The logic behind this policy can be summarized as follows. Nationalism is a masking ideology that leads legitimate class interests to be expressed, not in an appropriate class-based socialist movement, but rather in the form of an above-class national movement. National identity is not a primordial quality, but rather an unavoidable by-product of the modern capitalist *and* early socialist world, which must be passed through before a mature international socialist world can come into being. Since national identity *is* a real phenomenon in the modern world, it cannot be unequivocally condemned as reactionary. *Some* national claims – those confined to the realm of national forms – are in fact legitimate and must be granted in order to split the above-class national alliance. This policy will speed the emergence of class cleavages, and so allow the Party to recruit non-Russian proletarian and peasant support for its socialist agenda. Nationalism will be disarmed by granting the forms of nationhood.

To restate this strategy in Gellnerian terms, Soviet policy sought to decouple high culture and national identity. This is exactly what Stalin meant by his famous phrase about cultures 'national in form, socialist in content'.[23] Socialism would provide the basis for a new Soviet high culture, a state-wide cultural idiom inculcated through a universal, standardized, and yet multilingual, system of education and propaganda. Socialism, not nationalism, would be the state's unifying principle. National identity was accepted, and indeed propagated, by the Soviet state in order to avoid the emergence of defensive nationalism. Any hint of Russification was avoided. The idea of sponsoring a Soviet national identity was rejected, since such an attempt would be interpreted by non-Russians as a front for Russification. Instead, national identity was systematically promoted at the sub-state level in the form of national republics, with their own national elites, languages and cultures. Of course, these national cultures had to accommodate the new Soviet high culture. They therefore could not contain any fundamentally distinctive religious, legal, ideological or customary features.[24] Soviet citizens would share a common high culture, but not a common national identity. According to Gellner's theory, in the modern world, such an outcome was impossible.[25]

This decoupling of national identity and high culture would serve the long-term Soviet goal of transcending national identity. National identity would be depoliticized by an ostentatious demonstration of respect for the national identities of all Soviet citizens. This would in turn allow the Soviet state to demonstrate the superiority of its newly emerging socialist high culture without provoking a nationalist backlash.[26] The eventual universal acceptance of this high culture would result, over the very long term, in the gradual disappearance of separate national identities (though how exactly this would occur always remained shrouded in mystery).[27] Of course, such a development was impossible given a popular understanding of nations as primordial. Thus, the Soviet nationalities policy also represented a pedagogical effort to move the Soviet population from the popular understanding of nations as primordial and immutable to the Bolsheviks' own sociological understanding of nations as historical and contingent. The Communist Party would act not only as the vanguard of the working class, but the vanguard of Soviet nations as well: guiding them through the phase of modernization and national identity to socialism and transcendence of national identity.

However, the exact opposite occurred. Soviet policy initially inadvertently inculcated and strengthened popular primordialism. Then, in the second half of the 1930s, the Soviet state suddenly abandoned its previous belief in contingent nationality and began to propagate an extreme and crude form of primordialism. Why did this occur? I will argue that it was an unintended consequence of the extreme statism exemplified by Bolshevik national vanguardism. Take, for instance, the issue of assimilation. Typically, wherever nationality is seen more as a modern construct, such as in the United States and France, ethnic outsiders and immigrants are encouraged to assimilate with the shared national culture. In nations where a primordial understanding of nationality prevails, such as Germany or Israel, ethnic outsiders are neither expected nor encouraged to assimilate.[28] One would have anticipated, then, that the Soviet Union would have encouraged voluntary assimilation. In fact, it did not.[29] The reason, again, was to avoid the emergence of defensive nationalism. If a minority of non-Russians voluntarily Russified, this would lead to a growth in reactive or defensive nationalism among the remaining non-Russian majority. Therefore, even voluntary assimilation was actively discouraged. For instance, Soviet educational policy stipulated that all children must attend native-language schools, regardless of the fact that many non-Russian parents very much wanted their children to attend Russian-language schools.[30]

Thus, although the policy of systematically supporting national forms was intended to disarm nationalism and so prepare the way for an eventual transcendence of national identity, in practice it actively hindered that process. It required a constant routine of ethnic labeling and so inadvertently indoctrinated the Soviet population in the belief that ethnicity was an inherent, fundamental and crucially important characteristic of all individuals. In order to implement affirmative action programs, monitor their success, delineate national territories, assign children to native-language schools and administer dozens of other nationalities programs, the Soviet state constantly asked its citizens for their nationality.[31] It also asked their employers, their Party cell chairmen, trade union representatives, and so forth. All personnel forms had a line marked nationality. Moreover, affirmative action turned nationality into a valuable form of social capital. The nationality line in a job application form was not a neutral piece of information but a crucial advantage or disadvantage. The message broadcast by the state was crystal clear: nationality is one of the most important attributes of any individual.

Rather than indoctrinating the belief that national form was an essentially superficial and politically unimportant additive to socialist content, which was the Party's stated intention, this policy instead reinforced a popular belief in primordial ethnicity. It became second nature to label people nationally. When internal passports were introduced in 1932, there was no debate about whether to record nationality on them. It was included without reflection, just as it was on all personnel forms, as a necessary and crucial datum about any Soviet citizen.[32] Yet, the national line on Soviet passports became one of the single most important factors in not only reinforcing the belief, but also creating the social fact, that national identity was primordial and inherited.

The analogy between the Bolshevik approach to class and nationality is both striking and instructive. Despite the Bolsheviks' theoretical commitment to the mutable and temporary nature of both these identities, they in practice turned them into ascribed status categories.[33] Former workers retained their proletarian status even as they entered administration, while a one-time trader or well-to-do peasant could not easily shed his status as Nepman or kulak by entering a different profession. As with nationality, class was transformed into an ascribed status due to 'the legal and institutional structures that discriminated on the basis of class'.[34] It was necessary to label individuals by class and nationality in order to determine who should receive preference.[35] As with nationality, this encouraged a belief that class was an essential quality of an individual (with disastrous consequences for those labeled kulak), instead of a temporary and mutable attribute. In both cases, practice diverged strikingly from theory. It was never the Bolsheviks' articulated intention to abandon orthodox Marxist class analysis nor to promote a primordial understanding of national identity.

This outcome was instead an unintended consequence of the Bolsheviks' own extreme statism. Their attempts to organize, classify and reward their population according to sociological categories led them to reify categories they themselves viewed as constructed rather than essential. The behavior of the Soviet state differed drastically from the role assigned to the state in Gellner's model, where the state's main task was simply to organize a universal standardized system of education, while the impersonal social forces unleashed by industrialization drove identity formation.[36] In the Soviet case, however, the state intervened actively to manage identity categorization and so dramatically altered the typical consequences of modernization. This contrast suggests a major difference between market-driven and state-driven industrialization. In the latter case, there is a tendency to transform the impersonal modern categories of class and nationality into ascribed status categories, modern equivalents of traditional status (*soslovie*/*stand*) divisions.

If it was statism that generated ascribed status identities, then this phenomenon should have increased dramatically in the 1930s with the completion of Stalin's radically statist 'revolution from above'. Although carried out under a slogan of class warfare, this campaign resulted in the creation of an almost completely state-managed economy and society. By the early 1930s, class militancy was being downplayed and class-based affirmative action programs phased out. The 1936 Constitution abolished the category of class enemies. In principle, this should have meant the abolition of ascribed class categories and a movement towards a unified shared Soviet identity, the Gellnerian prerequisite for a Soviet nation.

Yet again, the opposite occurred. What Fitzpatrick has called 'Stalinist *soslovnost''* instead intensified.[37] Various population categories were assigned different legal privileges and duties. Peasants were the clearest case of a Stalinist neo-*soslovie*: they were legally denied passports and freedom of movement, required to pay special taxes and labor services, but also allowed a few special privileges such as the right to own a private plot and sell its surplus at market prices.[38] Another emerging neo-*soslovie* category was the 'leading cadres and specialists', who 'enjoyed a range of special privileges, including access to closed stores, chauffeured cars, and government dachas'.[39] Other population categories were Stakhanovites, *spetspereselentsy*, *edinolichniki*. Once again, this emerging system was generated by extreme Soviet statism. 'Stalinist *soslovnost''* was a system where individuals were categorized according to their relationship to the state, and granted status perquisites (or alternatively punishments), according to service rendered to the state.[40]

If the practice of ascribing class could survive the formal de-emphasis of class categories in 1936, it is no surprise that the practice of ascribing nationality should intensify greatly in the 1930s. Moreover, nationality was now ascribed as a primordial and essential attribute, not simply a historical and contingent one. With the de-emphasis of class in the 1930s, Soviet propaganda increasingly focused on the twin poles of a powerful, paternalistic state and an obedient, contented people (*narod*). Indeed, the 1936 Constitution inaugurated a cult of the popular (*narodnost'*). As one commentator noted: 'The constitution should remind us that the popular [*narodnost'*] is the highest criterion of all cultural work.'[41] This new cult of *narodnost'* led to a massive increase in the amount of attention devoted to folklore and *völkisch* artistic expression in the 1930s.[42] Dozens of new Institutes of National Culture sprang up across the Soviet Union after 1933, dedicated to the celebration and promotion of ethnically distinct, folkloric, primordial national cultures.[43] Massively publicized *dekady* of national art (invariably attended by Stalin and the Politburo) took place regularly in Moscow and emphasized national dance, song and folklore.[44] A highly clichéd essentializing rhetoric of national culture likewise emerged. Georgia, for instance, was invariably called 'sunny socialist Georgia', whose fine weather explained their 'joyful' national art.[45]

Prior to the mid-1930s, such 'exoticization' of national culture – we would call it Orientalism – was regularly denounced as a manifestation of Great Power chauvinism.[46] By 1937–8, it had become official state policy. On the one hand, the intensive practice of ethnic labeling had reified and essentialized national identities. On the other hand, the official shift in emphasis from class to people that took place with the triumph of Stalinist statism in the 1930s led to an increase in attention given to national culture as the literal embodiment of *narodnost'*. These two factors were the major forces driving the Soviet turn towards a primordial understanding of nations and national culture in the 1930s.

The new Soviet primordialism of the 1930s allowed the emergence of a previously absent category: the enemy nation.[47] In the 1920s, class ascription was used both to identify class allies for preferential treatment and to expose class enemies for punishment. The latter practice culminated in the dekulakization campaign, a total state effort to eliminate a reified class category. In the 1920s, however, there were no enemy nations.[48] It is true that the 'former Great Power nationality', the Russians, were ineligible for national-based affirmative action, and their traditional culture was often stigmatized as imperialist.[49] However, Russians were never singled out for punishment. The belief that nationality was historic and contingent, as well as compatible with a socialist high culture, implied that all negative national characteristics could be removed through re-education, rather than through a policy of national persecution analogous to dekulakization.

The shift towards primordial nationality and the extreme statism of the 1930s, which generated a xenophobic attitude towards all influence from abroad, combined to create the category of enemy nations.[50] These enemy nations were primarily foreign nation-states, especially Germany, who were perceived as a threat to the present-day Soviet Union, but were now imagined as primordial enemies of the Russian state.[51] Many of these enemy states, however, had substantial diaspora communities living within the Soviet Union. Given the new primordialism, it was assumed that these nationalities owed their highest loyalty to their 'homelands' abroad and so represented an internal enemy. Therefore, beginning in 1935, these Soviet diaspora nationalities – Germans, Poles, Finns, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Koreans, Chinese, Kurds – began to be deported away from the Soviet Union's border regions.[52] With the onset of the Great Terror, suspicions of disloyalty escalated dramatically and these same diaspora nationalities (as well as Bulgarians, Macedonians, Iranians, Greeks, and Afghans) were labeled enemy nations and targeted for mass arrest throughout the Soviet Union.[53] On the one hand, the emergence of the category of enemy nation, which during and after the Second World War would be extended to numerous indigenous Soviet nationalities, marked the triumph of primordialist thinking.[54] On the other hand, since the concept of enemy nations was not compatible with a belief in modern constructed nations, it also represented a final factor fueling the Soviet turn towards primordial nationality.[55]

Soviet primordialism, then, can be explained by a number of convergent factors. The pervasive Soviet practice of labeling individuals by national identity in order to administer affirmative action programs helped turn nationality into an ascribed hereditary status. Passportization reflected and exacerbated this trend. In addition, Stalin's statist revolution from above produced a paternalistic cult of the popular, which in turn encouraged a celebration of primordial, *völkisch* national culture. Finally, the emergence of the category of enemy nations both exemplified and further reinforced the tendency to think of nations primordially rather than instrumentally. The Soviet turn towards primordial nationality, then, was not intentional. It was the result of unforeseen consequences of the original Soviet nationalities policy combined with the affinity of primordial nationality with broader Soviet social processes such as the statist cult of the popular.

I will now conclude with a comparison of the impact of the Stalinist and Gellnerian models of modernization on the formation of national identity. Gellner's model demands an outcome where high culture and national identity coincide. Soviet policy, on the other hand, sought to decouple high culture ('socialist in content') from national identity ('national in form'), first in order to enable the transcendence of national identity, then later as a consequence of the Soviet belief in primordial nationality. This was Soviet policy. What, however, was the impact of that policy on the actual process of identity formation? Soviet policy most certainly did impede the development of a common Soviet national identity, which might otherwise have emerged in a much stronger form as a result of the Soviet Union's modernization. (Likewise, ascribing class undoubtedly inhibited the emergence of modern class consciousness.) However, were separate national identities and a non-national state-wide high 'Soviet' culture able to emerge simultaneously and coexist? Clearly national identities greatly intensified under Soviet rule and, although this is a question awaiting future research, some evidence suggests at least a trend towards a common Soviet high culture.[56] For instance, in their interviews with Second World War era émigrés, Bauer and Inkeles found that their Ukrainian and Russian emigrés shared an almost identical sociological profile and identical social attitudes, with one major difference. They disagreed markedly on all questions relating to their perceptions of the nationalities question. The authors found this result significant and puzzling.[57] My analysis of these data would suggest that, for these admittedly culturally similar nationalities, the Soviet policy of decoupling high culture and national identity was working. Ukrainians and Russians shared a common Soviet high culture, as well as radically different ascribed national identities.[58]

The second distinctive feature of Soviet nationalities policy was its peculiar evolution towards a primordial understanding of nationality in the 1930s. Here there is considerable reason to believe that

Soviet primordialism had a strong impact on identity formation. Western travelers to the post-Stalinist Soviet Union reported an insatiable Soviet curiosity about their visitors' nationality and a marked refusal to accept a non-primordial identity, frequently leading to the following vignette: '"What's your nationality?" "American." "No" (shaking head in exasperation), "I'm not asking for your citizenship, what's your nationality?"' American, like Soviet, was not a nationality. Something more primordial, like German or Chechen, was required.[59] More scientific post-Soviet survey and ethnographic research has confirmed the remarkable strength of popular primordialism across the entire Soviet Union.[60]

As I have emphasized, primordialism *per se* is not at all incompatible with modernization theory. Indeed, Gellner argues it is the typical interpretation of nationality in the modern era.[61] Rather, Soviet practice was unusual, indeed bizarre, in its combination of primordialism and the decoupling of high culture and national identity. Primordialists are typically nationalists, who cannot imagine the separation of culture and identity. National identity is primordial because it is the expression of an ancient, continuous cultural tradition. Yet, in the late 1930s, the Soviet state combined their 1920s belief that national cultures could be bled of all religious, cultural, ideological, and customary 'content', reduced to a set of folkloric *völkisch* rituals, with their 1930s belief that these national cultures were nevertheless primordial and essential, of sufficient strength to warrant the deportation and persecution of stigmatized enemy nations. Soviet policy had evolved into an oxymoron: ascribed primordialism.

Stalinist modernization, then, produced a divergent sociological outcome where, in contrast to typical modern industrial societies, an emerging non-national high culture and separate primordially imagined national identities coexisted. Yet there is also a certain compelling resemblance between the Soviet Union and Gellner's ideal-type pre-industrial empire. Like his empire, the Soviet Union was divided vertically into separate cultures. Soviet industrialization destroyed the remnants of pre-industrial folk culture, but did not lead to a common Soviet national identity. Instead, the authentic primordial village-based folk cultures were replaced by ascribed national identities, which were nevertheless imagined primordially. Likewise, the Soviet Union also resembled Gellner's pre-industrial empire in its horizontal division between the people and a statewide elite status group: Stalin's 'leading cadres and specialists', the future *nomenklatura*. In Gellner's paradigm, industrialization eliminates the old status elite, who either assimilate with the new state-wide high culture or form the leadership of national separatist movements directed against that new high culture. In the Soviet system, the state annihilated the old status elite, but then replaced it with a new neo-*soslovie* elite.

Modernization or neo-traditionalism? I believe that my evidence about nationality strongly supports the neo-traditional paradigm for understanding Soviet social processes. Let me again re-emphasize here that the neo-traditional model does not assert that Communist societies represent a return to traditional society. They most certainly do not.[62] Neo-traditional societies, rather, represent an alternative form of modernization, one that includes the most characteristic processes of market-driven modernization (industrialization, urbanization, secularization, universal education and literacy), but one which likewise produces a variety of practices that bear a striking resemblance to characteristic features of traditional pre-modern societies. The primordially imagined nationalities of the Soviet Union are not Gellner's village-based folk cultures. 'Stalinist *soslovnost"* is not Tsarist *soslovnost"*.'[63]

The primary cause of unintended neo-traditionalist outcomes was not the persistence of traditional values into the Soviet era but rather, as I have argued throughout this paper, extreme Soviet statism.[64] In Communist neo-traditionalism, the state substitutes itself for tradition, takes over some of the roles played by tradition in pre-modern societies. Gellner's folk-based cultures were the authentic product of tradition, while Communism's folkloric national identities were the invention of the state (usually with the enthusiastic participation of national elites). If Tsarist *soslovnost'* already marked a state-sponsored endorsement of traditional status categories, Stalinist *soslovnost'* represented a novel creation of status categories by the Soviet state.

The Soviet state substituted itself not only for the role of tradition in pre-modern states, but also, of course, for the role of the market in non-socialist industrial societies. I have already noted the key role of this substitution in the creation of the neo-traditional status categories of ascribed class and nationality. The state's assumption of market functions further links these two sociological outcomes to the other major social practices accounted for by the neo-traditional model: namely, the dominant role of personalistic and informal relations, of patron–client networks, *blat* and *tolkachi*, paternalistic 'big men' and their submissive petitioners. I have not addressed this aspect of the neo-traditional model, since these practices are not directly connected to issues of nationality.[65]

However, these practices can also be explained as a product of the Soviet state's substitution of itself for the market. The Soviet state tried to establish a modern, impersonal system for distributing consumer goods, wages and promotions.[66] However, on the one hand, this system proved incapable of successfully distributing goods efficiently. On the other hand, at each level of the distribution, this system relied not on the impersonal forces of the market, but rather on an individual bureaucrat whose personal interest did not coincide with the interest of the state. The result was the emergence of an informal system of distribution, based on the pervasive use of personal connections. At the top of the system, the result was patron–client relations and deferential petitioning to paternalistic 'big men'. At the bottom, the result was the exchange of favors through the system of *blat.* As with ascribed status categories, extreme Soviet statism was the root cause of neo-traditional outcomes.

Modernization is the theory of Soviet intentions; neo-traditionalism, the theory of their unintended consequences.

Notes

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1 I. Stalin, 'Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros' (1913) in *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros* (Moscow, 1934), p. 4.

2 Within this broad paradigm, Marxists differed considerably on a variety of specific issues. For an overview, see Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 28–42.

3 Stalin, p. 10.

4 I use the word 'primordial' in this paper to refer to a belief in both the antiquity of modern nations and the fundamental continuity in a nation's

essence across time. The primordialist/modernist dispute in nationalities studies is already an old and increasingly unproductive one. For a summary with bibliography, see the introduction to John Hutchinson and Anthony B. Smith, eds, *Ethnicity* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 3–16.

5 B. Volin, 'Velikii russkii narod', *Bolshevik* no. 9 (1938), p. 28. I translate '*velikii*' here as 'magnificent' to convey its honorific content and distinguish it from the more neutral ethnonym '*velikorusskii*' (Great Russian) which the author also uses.

6 Ibid., p. 29.

7 For a detailed analysis of this turn in the period from 1933 to 1938, see Terry Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire: Ethnicity and the Soviet State, 1923–1938' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996), pp. 932–82. For its continuation after the Second World War, see Yuri Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review* v. 53 (Summer 1994), p. 449; Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), pp. 303–36; Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1969).

8 Barrington Moore, Jr, *Soviet Politics – The Dilemma of Power. The Role of Ideas in Social Change* (Cambridge, MA, 1950); Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, MA, 1953); Alex Inkeles and Raymond A. Bauer, *The Soviet Citizen: Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1959).

9 Ken Jowitt, 'Neotraditionalism' (1983), reprinted in *New World Disorder: the Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 121–58; Andrew G. Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley, 1986); Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity, and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Amronk, NY, 1982).

10 These theorists all were working within a classical Weberian framework for the transition from traditional to modern society. I would emphasize that their theory, and especially my version of it, does not assume a single, universal path from the traditional to the modern (indeed, it explicitly contradicts this view) as the much-criticized modernization theory of the 1950s frequently did. My approach comes out of the tradition that posits different modernization outcomes depending upon the historical traditions of a given society, the historical epoch when it modernizes, and the strategy of modernization chosen by a society's elite. See Barrington Moore, Jr, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, 1966); Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1962); David D. Laitin, *Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa* (Cambridge, 1992).

11 For an early appreciation of the personalistic nature of Stalinist society, see Joseph Berliner, *Factory and Manager in the USSR* (Cambridge, MA, 1957), pp. 182–230. For recent studies of these issues which, to my mind, exemplify the neo-traditionalist approach, see Julie Hessler, 'Culture of Shortages: a Social History of Soviet Trade, 1917–1953' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996); Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr, 'Clientelism and the Roots of Post-Soviet Disorder', in Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change* (Ann Arbor, 1994),

pp. 341–76; Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 147–82; Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), pp. 396–405; Golfo Alexopoulos, 'The Ritual Lament: a Narrative of Appeal in the 1920s and 1930s', *Russian History* v. 24 (1997), pp. 117–29; Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s', *Slavic Review* v. 55 (1996), pp. 78–105. For a provocative theory on the role of the personalistic in Soviet society, see Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 114–24.

12 The term was coined by Ken Jowitt in his provocative essay, 'Neotraditionalism' (1983) in *New World Disorder*, pp. 121–58. I am, however, more indebted to the version of the theory presented in Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism*.

13 For an excellent theory linking the emergence of nations and state centralization, see Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, MA, 1992). For a non-Marxist theory emphasizing ideology, see Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA, 1992). For a non-Marxist theory emphasizing industrialization, see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY, 1983).

14 Gellner's theory is stated in three works: *Thought and Change* (Chicago, 1964); *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY, 1983); *Nationalism* (New York, 1997). Although I find Gellner's theory brilliant and in many ways convincing, by using it I do not mean to endorse all aspects of his theory. It needs an account of the role of state centralization and popular contention (as in Tilly's *Coercion, Capital, and European States*) and the role of individual actors. For the latter, see David D. Laitin, 'Turning Megalomanians into Ruritanians' in *Identity in Formation: the Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), pp. 243–60.

15 Gellner softens this somewhat in his conclusion: 'It is not denied that the agrarian world occasionally threw up units which may have resembled a modern national state; only that the agrarian world could occasionally do so, whilst the modern world is bound to do so in most cases.' Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 138.

16 Ibid., p. 28.

17 Ibid., p. 124.

18 Ibid., pp. 63–87.

19 The following is an extremely condensed version of an argument made in Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire', pp. 15–62. For other accounts, see Slezkine, 'The USSR as Communal Apartment'; Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past* (Stanford, 1993).

20 See, for example, Piatakov's speech in *Vos'moi s'ezd RKP/b/. 18–23 marta 1919 g. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1933), pp. 79–83.

21 See Lenin's comments in *Vos'moi s'ezd*, pp. 50–66, 101–9. Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros*, pp. 65–139.

22 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 129.

23 Stalin's original formulation of this idea in 1925 was: 'Proletarian in its content, national in its form – such is the universal culture to which socialism is heading.' Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros*, p. 158.

24 For an account of Soviet attacks on such customs, see Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton, 1974); Jörg Baberowski, 'Stalinismus als imperiales Phänomen: die islamischen Regionen der Sowjetunion, 1920–1941', in Stefan Plaggenborg, ed., *Stalinismus: neue Forschungen und Konzepe* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 113–50; and the forthcoming dissertation from Douglas Northrup at Stanford University on gender in Uzbekistan.

25 Gellner states that when such a discrepancy prevails, an individual will either pursue assimilation or separatist nationalism, which will then end the discrepancy. Gellner, *Nationalism*, p. 75.

26 It would also allow the socialist high culture to be propagated more efficiently through the use of national languages. Isabelle Kreindler, 'A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy', *Slavic Review* v. 36 (March 1977), pp. 86–100.

27 For Stalin's comments on this issue, see Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros*, pp. 158, 192–4. Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (RTsKhIDNI), f. 558, op. 1, d. 4490 (1929), ll. 1–2. The Bolshevik goal appeared to be the transformation of nationality into a purely symbolic identity, which would in no way interfere with their sociological transformation. This goal is somewhat similar to Herbert J. Gans' interpretation of what has happened to ethnicity in America. Herbert J. Gans, 'Symbolic Ethnicity: the Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* v. 2 (1979), pp. 9–17.

28 For an excellent case study, see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1992).

29 For a more detailed account of Soviet hostility to voluntary assimilation, see Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire', pp. 463–562.

30 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 296, op. 1, d. 169 (1926), ll. 4–5.

31 On nationality-based affirmative action programs, see Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire', pp. 63–310.

32 I was unable to find any discussion of nationality in the documentation surrounding passportization in 1932–3, nor did Nathalie Moins, 'Passeportisation, statistique des migrations et controle de l'identité sociale', *Cahiers du Monde russe* v. 38 (1997), pp. 587–600.

33 For the analysis of class, I am relying on Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class: the Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia', *Journal of Modern History* v. 65 (December 1993), pp. 745–70. See also, Alec Nove, 'Is There a Ruling Class in the USSR?' (1975), reprinted in *Political Economy and Soviet Socialism* (Boston, 1979), pp. 195–218.

34 Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class', p. 768.

35 On affirmative action programs for workers, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, 1979).

36 One should note here that Gellner does understate the typical interventions of the state in identity formation. The nationalizing state typically does more than simply form a unified educational system, it also uses various forms of discrimination to pressure minorities towards assimilation,

as the Soviet Union's East European neighbors did during the inter-war period.

37 The term 'Stalinist *soslovnost'*' and the examples in the rest of this paragraph are derived from Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class', pp. 763–70.

38 Ibid., pp. 763–5.

39 Ibid., p. 767.

40 Ibid., pp. 769–70; Nove, pp. 214–16. Here one should note that the extreme social mobility produced by Stalinist industrialization (as well as periodic attacks on elites) meant that an even relatively static estate system could not and did not emerge. The status system that did emerge does, however, bear greater resemblance to the estate systems of bureaucratic absolutism (such as Petrine Russia and its table of ranks) than classic feudalism, since in the former system the state's primacy allowed it to rank even its elites and provide upward social mobility to a greater degree than the weaker feudal state. In such systems, honor depends more on one's service (*sluzhba*) than one's birth. For the difference between the two systems, see Max Weber, *Economy and Society* v. 2 (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 1068–88.

41 D. Mirskii, 'O velikoi khartii narodov. Konstitutsiia pobedy', *Literaturnaia gazeta* no. 41 (20 July 1936), p. 2.

42 For the massive attention devoted to folklore in the 1930s, see the new journal, *Sovetskii fol'klor* v. 1–7 (1934–41).

43 See, for instance, GARF f. 3316, op. 29, d. 601 (1936), ll. 3–16. GARF f. 3316, op. 29, d. 605 (1936–7), ll. 1–54. GARF f. 3316, op. 13, d. 20 (1934), l. 32ob.

44 On the coverage of the *dekady*, see *Pravda* and *Literaturnaia gazeta* in March 1936 (Ukrainian) and January 1937 (Georgian).

45 'Solnechnyi prazdnik iskusstva', *Literaturnaia gazeta* no. 3 (15 January 1937), p. 5.

46 See, for instance, V. Kovalenko, 'Proletarskaia literatura SSSR v bor'be za leninskoe natsional'no-kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo', *RAPP* nos. 1–2 (1932), p. 49; Peredovaia, 'Usilim vzaimodeistvie kul'tur narodov SSSR', *Literaturnaia gazeta* no. 24 (16 June 1930), p. 1.

47 The following two paragraphs summarize an argument presented in Terry Martin, 'The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing', *Journal of Modern History* (December 1998).

48 The closest thing to an enemy nation was the quasi-ethnic Cossack *soslovie*, who were periodically singled out for group persecution. Peter Holquist, '"Conduct Merciless Mass Terror." Decossackization on the Don, 1919', *Cahiers du monde russe* v. 38 (January–July 1997), pp. 127–62; N. F. Bugai, '20–40-e gody: deportatsiia naseleniia's territorii evropeiskoi Rossii', *Otechestvennaia istoriia* no. 4 (1992), pp. 37–40; Nubuo Shimotomai, 'A note on the Kuban Affair, 1932–1933', *Acta Slavica Iaponica* v. 1 (1983), pp. 39–56; Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire', pp. 606–32.

49 For a good example of the latter phenomenon, see GARF f. 2307, op. 14, d. 81 (1929), ll. 27–8. Also, N. F. Iakovlev, 'Za latinizatsiiu russkogo alfavita', *Kul'tura i pis'mennost' vostoka* no. 6 (1930), pp. 27–43.

50 For a more nuanced presentation of this argument, see Martin, 'An Affirmative Action Empire', pp. 696–789.

51 See the quotation in the second paragraph on the primordial quarrel between 'German elements' and Russia, dating back to the Teutonic Knights and Alexander Nevsky.

52 In addition to Martin, 'The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing', see N. F. Bugai, *L. Beriia – I. Stalinu: 'Soglasno vashemu ukazaniiu . . .'* (Moscow, 1995). Mikolaj Iwanov, *Pierwszy narod ukarany. Polacy v zviazku radzieckim 1921–1939* (Warsaw, 1991); Jean-Jacques Marie, *Les Peuples Deportes D'Union Sovietique* (Paris, 1995), pp. 21– 33; Michael Gelb, 'The Western Finnic Minorities and the Origins of the Stalinist Nationalities Deportations', *Nationalities Papers* v. 24 (June 1996), pp. 237–68; *Belaia kniga o deportatsii koreiskogo naseleniia Rossii v 30–40-kh godakh. Kniga pervaia* (Moscow, 1992).

53 Martin, 'The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing'; N. V. Petrov and A. B. Roginskii, '"Pol'skaia operatsiia" NKVD 1937–1938 gg.', in *Repressiia protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan* (Moscow, 1997), pp. 22–43.

54 Bugai, *L. Beriia – I. Stalinu*, pp. 27–250.

55 As noted above, when passports were introduced in 1932, there was no special concern about nationality and individuals were allowed to choose their own nationality when acquiring a passport. At the height of the terror campaign against enemy nations in 1937–8, an NKVD decree of 2 April 1938 declared that henceforth nationality should be determined by the nationality of the parents and not the free choice of the individual. As examples to be watched carefully, the NKVD cited 'Germans, Poles and others' who were trying to present themselves as 'Russians, Belorussians and others'. Obviously the concern was over members of enemy nations trying to change their national identity in order to avoid persecution. Here is clear proof that the emergence of the category of enemy nation directly influenced the most important force for ascribed primordialism: inherited passport nationality. For a summary of the decree, see Petrov and Roginskii, '"Pol'skaia operatsiia"', p. 36. For context, see Martin, 'The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing' and Moins, 'Passeportisation', pp. 596–7.

56 For the not uncommon phenomenon of individuals claiming Russian as a native language (and therefore presumably a high degree of assimilation) and another inherited national identity, see Robert J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 276–8. For an ethnographic account of this phenomenon, see Bhavna Dave, 'Becoming Mankurty: Russification, Progress, and Social Mobility among Urban Kazakhs' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, 1994).

57 Bauer and Inkeles, *The Soviet Citizen*, pp. 338–76.

58 Of course, this finding is only suggestive. Ukrainians and Russians shared very similar cultures. One would not expect such similar social attitudes between Russians and, say, Uzbeks. If this observation is correct, however, one should be witnessing a marked convergence of Russian and Uzbek social attitudes (indeed the social attitudes of all Soviet nationalities).

59 A good account of ethnic self-identification is Rasma Karklins, *Ethnic Relations in the USSR: the Perspective from Below* (Boston, 1986), pp. 22–44. The dialogue is based on my personal experience. Neither of my two logical answers to the question, 'What is your nationality?' – Canadian

or Mennonite – was ever satisfactory to my interlocutors. We usually ended up with 'German' (since my grandparents spoke this as their high language though they all spoke different Germanic dialects and none had ancestors from Germany itself), an answer that mollified them but bore no relation to my own national self-identification.

60 Laitin, *Identity in Formation.* See, in particular, the section 'Primordial Solidarities are Strong', pp. 239–40.

61 Gellner, *Nationalism,* p. 92.

62 I should here distinguish my argument about Soviet neo-traditionalism from the thesis of Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: the Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York, 1946). My primary concern – ascribed status identities – is not part of Timasheff's *Great Retreat* thesis. However, our arguments do overlap in dealing with the pronounced shift towards the *völkisch* and folkloric in the 1930s. Therefore I would like to emphasize that my neo-traditionalist argument does not at all assume a retreat for Bolshevik ideology or practice of the period 1918–32. Quite the contrary. Ascribed status identities emerged due to the Soviet state's policy of categorizing its population in order to punish enemies and reward friends. This practice began in 1918, perhaps peaked in the period 1928–32, but continued throughout the 1930s and beyond, although the categories to be rewarded and punished evolved considerably.

63 A point emphasized by Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class', p. 766.

64 My argument, therefore, does not support Moshe Lewin's emphasis on the peasantization of Soviet institutions as an explanation for traditionalist outcomes. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York, 1985), pp. 3–90.

65 Perhaps this is overstated. It seems likely that the neo-traditionalist norms of Soviet society had a strong affinity with traditional clan relations, which were still strong in many regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia in October 1917. The strength of those relations now, and similar clan-like ties (*semeistvennost'* in Stalinist parlance) in many Russian regions, may represent not so much persistence of traditional patterns as a neo-traditional phenomenon. This is also a reminder that Soviet culture did not always center on Russian norms.

66 The definitive work on the informal social practices which evolved as market substitutions is Julie Hessler, 'Culture of Shortages'. For the economics lying behind these social practices, see Janos Kornai, *The Socialist System: the Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton, 1992).

Part IV

Narrative and Identity in the Soviet Context

9

Narratives of October and the Issue of Legitimacy

Frederick C. Corney

> 'Est-ce donc une révolte?'
> 'Non, Sire, c'est une révolution!'
> (Louis XVI to Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, after the storming of the Bastille)

The October Revolution was fought and won most enduringly not by force of arms on the streets of Moscow or in the hallways of the Winter Palace in Petrograd in late 1917, but in newspapers, in halls and on speaking platforms all across the former Russian Empire both before and after this formal change of political power. Well into the 1920s, battle was joined energetically at the symbolic, artistic, political and aesthetic levels simultaneously, involving the deployment of what Keith Michael Baker has called, with regard to an earlier revolution, 'ideological arsenals'.[1] The battle was over the broader story that the events of October 1917 would come to convey. It was epitomized by the immediate contestation amongst the political players over whether the events of late October 1917 in fact constituted a true revolution (*revoliutsiia*) or an illegitimate conspiracy or plot (*zagovor*). This contestation over meaning is the focus of the present paper.

The traditional notion of narrative as a largely unproblematic, even 'commonsensical' or 'natural' reconstruction of the past was upset by Hayden White's assertion that narrative form itself had 'content' or meaning.[2] The authenticity of the narrative relies upon the disappearance of the process by which it has been *constructed.* Historians play a major role in the creation of meaning and coherence from the sources examined, a role they hide by using a variety of rhetorical and literary devices.[3] They feel that they uncover the truths in the evidence through a combination of intuition and professional skill, and that the shape of their narrative is guided by these revealed truths. Divested of the apparatus of construction of the narrative of the past, 'history', as Roland Barthes writes, 'seems to tell itself'.[4] To question the nature of narrative, namely the process of its construction, is, as White puts it, 'to invite reflection on the very nature of culture'.[5]

The October Revolution was less an event than a meaning-making process.[6] In the shadow of the triumphal Soviet narrative of a crescendo of mass activity exploding in a final dramatic and passionate release against the existing order exists an equally coherent narrative of valiant, but vain attempts by Russian patriots to stem the onslaught on Russia's foundations by a small clique of upstarts. October was, and remains, both revolution and military coup. The idea that different narrative representations of the same event can coexist would seem to cast doubt upon the very reality of the event.[7] Indeed, recent theories about the narrative construction of reality have done much to upset the traditional notions of fact as a mirror of reality and representation as a re-enactment of the past.[8] Still, the coexistence of October as both revolution and coup in no way denies past reality, it merely shows that the chaos of past events can offer up different stories.[9] The October Revolution (and of course the October coup) is the story told about these events, and as such involves their selection, interpretation and organization into a coherent whole. The historian's task is to understand the myriad factors that help shape the story, in an effort to evaluate the power of the story.

Like the Holocaust, which Martin Jay has called 'a post facto conceptual entity not in use at the time, which no one individual ever witnessed', the October Revolution was an event constructed *post facto* at a variety of levels simultaneously.[10] The notion, therefore, that it could be witnessed by participants or bystanders in some unmediated form, 'as it happens' so to speak, is an illusion. The storming of the Winter Palace as the seminal event of the revolutionary narrative was constructed, not wholly successfully it should be added, over time.[11] The imagery of a bastion of evil stormed was informed by the storming of the Bastille.[12] The albeit limited success of this representation, and the concomitant failure (at least inside Russia) of attempts by Bolshevik opponents to represent the Winter Palace as raped rather than stormed, did not depend on its being measured against 'historical reality'. The authenticity, indeed the viability, of a particular narrative, and the representations it contained, depended rather on its ability to draw in large sections of the population into the production of the narrative, indeed into the production of 'the past'. In short, the successful narrative draws the population into the process of its production. Through Baker's 'ideological arsenals', individuals and groups live these narratives at the level of personal or group experience. In the Bolshevik project, the revolutionary narrative would be experienced most personally at the level of individual and group memory.[13] Indeed, it would provide the very language for people to articulate their memories.

Of course, these narratives are most effective when their reception has been prepared, if possible over an extended period of time, prior to the events in question. Part of this preparation was the invocation by the Bolsheviks (and others) at various times of selected precedents from a pre-existing revolutionary narrative, in short a revolutionary tradition.[14] Indeed, the specific revolutionary narrative purveyed by the Bolsheviks drew upon a long period of preparation by revolutionaries of all stripes.[15] By proclaiming October a revolution, the Bolsheviks, among others, were invoking a story already told. As such, this story already possessed different possible dénouements, of which all were well aware. These past stories informed the present revolutionaries' language, argumentation, their very perceptions of the world. As Jay notes, wars and revolutions are 'linguistically charged', namely 'already inflected with narrative meaning for those who initiate or suffer them in their own lives . . . [and are] at least in part deliberate challenges to the linguistic order that sustains the old regime'.[16]

Revolution could not, however, merely be proclaimed by the Bolsheviks in late October 1917, it had to be actively argued, championed even. Indeed, the passion with which Bolsheviks and others did so was for them proof of the very legitimacy of their argument. The success of the narrative of conspiracy would similarly depend on the political and cultural resources, on the passion and energy of those arguing it. The contestation of these two representations in the first weeks after 25 October 1917 pivoted on issues which would not only ultimately shape the final narratives (for these, although informed by revolutionary tradition, were still to be explicitly defined), but would come to stamp the entire historiographic debate about the essential nature of the Soviet system. Whether the October events were narrated as a tale of military and political conspiracy, a tale which became dominant in the émigré centers of Europe and profoundly influenced much Western historiography of Soviet Russia, or whether they were narrated as a tale of revolution, a tale which dominated Soviet and not a little Western historiography, the same issue was at stake, an issue identified by Martin Malia: the legitimacy of the Soviet system.[17]

Of revolutions and conspiracies

Like the press in late eighteenth-century Paris, the press in Petrograd and Moscow from late October 1917 was engaged in a battle to 'frame public understanding of events'.[18] At issue in the case of the October events was whether they would be framed as conspiracy or revolution. This was apparent even in the most tentative formulations of contemporaries. Drawing upon a week of press accounts after 25 October, the philosopher Vladimir Vernadskii wrote in his diary that 'the impossible is becoming possible, and the unprecedented is turning into a story of catastrophe or, perhaps, a new world phenomenon'.[19] What constituted revolution was not at issue in this battle. Even those who cried conspiracy agreed on that. At issue was whether the October events possessed the necessary elements to be regarded as a legitimate revolution.

In the days and weeks after 25 October 1917, the people of the major cities of the former Empire awoke to bold banner headlines on the front pages of their newspapers, loudly proclaiming that events of significance were under way.[20] Every day people saw armed Red Guards and soldiers on the streets of Petrograd and Moscow, in the railway stations, telephone exchanges, and post offices. They encountered road-blocks, and were asked to present identification at strategic points around the cities. 'The Revolution was an insistent fact', wrote Albert Rhys Williams, a correspondent for the *New York Evening Post*, 'assailing us in eye and ear with banners and battlecries, parades and assemblages.'[21] Newspapers and agitators of various hues provided frameworks within which citizens could 'understand', or more accurately, 'ascribe meaning' to what was happening all around them.

At an extraordinary meeting of the Petrograd Soviet on the afternoon of 25 October 1917, Bolshevik leaders, announcing the overthrow of the Provisional Government, began the task of conveying to the assembled that revolution was indeed under way. Trotsky spoke of the 'huge masses' which had been involved in the overthrow, and praised the 'heroism and self-sacrifice' of the soldiers and workers of Petrograd. 'What does this workers' and peasants' revolution mean?' asked Lenin, and answered his own question: 'the oppressed masses themselves will create power [*vlast'*]'. Lunacharsky told them that 'we are experiencing a great turnaround in our history; truly, our revolution is developing according to the model of the great revolutions'. Some of the assembled may have been troubled by the apparent contradiction in Trotsky's observation that during these events the 'common man slept peacefully and did not know that at this time one power was being replaced by another'. Others may have been more disturbed by the ignorance Trotsky expressed about reactions outside of Petrograd or at the front, or by the implication in Zinoviev's speech that 'the huge part of the peasantry' was not on their side.[22] The meaning-making process, however, was yet in its infancy.

The Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) and Mensheviks agreed with the Bolsheviks that mass will was the key to revolution, the Social Democratic newspaper, *Rabochaia gazeta*, picking up precisely on Trotsky's observation that average citizens were asleep while it was all happening.[23] While conceding that the Bolshevik 'action' (*vystuplenie*) was an accomplished fact, *Rabochaia gazeta* denied that it was either a revolution or even an uprising (*vosstanie*). It was rather a South American-style military junta, a 'pronunciamento' by the Bolsheviks, in which the popular masses were taking no active part.[24] A later editorial maintained that the 'Bolsheviks of Petrograd' had 'criminally arrested' the Provisional Government and declared power, 'against the will of the revolutionary people [*narod*]'.[25] The SR daily, *Delo naroda*, under the heading 'Revolution has Triumphed', initially merely reproduced the laconic announcement in the evening edition of the Bolshevik newspaper, *Rabochii i soldat*, for 25 October about the passing of power into the hands of the revolutionary committee of the Petrograd Soviet.[26] Two days later, however, it proclaimed that 'on the 24–25 October there has occurred no great workers' revolution, something which can be accomplished only after many years of organization of the toiling masses, but rather a seizure of power by a clique [*kuchka*] of dreamers'. Unlike the February Revolution, the Bolshevik adventure in no way expressed the 'hidden thoughts of the toiling masses'.[27]

The Bolsheviks addressed these attacks explicitly and in detail. 'Where is the conspiracy?' asked the Bolshevik daily, *Pravda*, on 31 October. Claims that they had staged a conspiracy, namely 'a secret agreement of a few people', were unfounded because they had openly agitated at mass meetings and in the press, and the 'overthrow [*perevorot*]' had been carried out by 'tens, hundreds, thousands of workers and soldiers'. The uprising was successful, the editorial continued, 'precisely because it was not an adventure of conspirators but a popular revolution'.[28] Such representations of the events of October 1917, *Pravda* pointed out repeatedly, were a truly stupendous misunderstanding of the significance of the events: 'So this is how history is being written. [SR–Menshevik newspapers] are calling one of the most grandiose events of recent times, the proletarian–peasant revolution, . . . a "military conspiracy", a "forcing of the will of a minority onto a majority".' The article asked why the February overthrow was regarded as a revolution, and the October Revolution as a military conspiracy. February, it implied, had removed only an individual from power, and was therefore more deserving of the designation 'conspiracy' than the October Revolution which was smashing 'the ruling social force to its roots', and placing power into the hands of 'genuine democratic forces [*demokratiia*]'. The revolution had indeed happened twenty-four hours before the 'formally designated time', namely the opening of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, 'which no one can deny truly represents the majority of the people'. Nonetheless, the article added, it still expressed the will of a majority of the Congress which had made no secret of its opinion of the need for a 'break with the bourgeoisie'.[29]

The Menshevik and SR press argued that the lack of mass support meant that this uprising also lacked another crucial element necessary for it to be regarded as a revolution, namely the enthusiasm and drama integral to popular uprisings. This was no small accusation. For revolutionaries then and now, the very legitimacy of revolution lies in its drama and passion. 'The revolution, as an elemental force, has value in itself', the author Andrei Sinyavsky has written, 'It's not a question of being right or wrong. It is what it is.'[30] To deny the drama and passion of these events was to deny the revolution itself. Criticizing the 'Bolshevik conspiracy', *Rabochaia gazeta* wrote that 'revolution brings freedom, a joyful feeling of liberation, celebration'.[31] Not only were the popular masses not taking an active part, it continued, even those small detachments of soldiers which had helped the Bolshevik leaders related to it 'without any kind of enthusiasm, with indifferent resignation'.[32] The SR daily contrasted this with the February Revolution: 'Where are the crowds of many thousands who welcomed the February Revolution? Where are the worker mass meetings, where are the demonstrations filing past with red flags and victorious songs on the streets of Petrograd?'[33] Rather than riding the passion and drama of revolution, *Rabochaia gazeta* implied on 1 November, the Bolsheviks were isolated by mass indifference and were 'suffocating in the Petrograd atmosphere'.[34] Another right-socialist newspaper, *Den'*, wrote that the 'manufactured' nature of this uprising was revealed by the fact that it possessed no 'spontaneous element [*stikhiia*], no passion, in general no temperament'.[35] The writer Zinaida Gippius captured this in inimitable fashion in her diary on 27 October:

> What I am about to say is very strange. But it is BORING for me to write. Yes, amidst the red fog, amidst these loathsome and unprecedented horrors, at the bottom of this senselessness is boredom. A whirlwind of events and – immobility. Everything is falling down, is flying to the devil and – there is no life. There is not what makes life: the element of struggle. In human life there is always the element of voluntary struggle; it almost does not exist now. There is so little of it in the center of events. And there is the smell of carrion.[36]

The cause of the emptiness of this 'invented revolution', as *Den'* put it, was that it was created 'not by proclamations, not by fiery appeals, but by articles and feuilletons'.[37] The notion of the October Revolution as a paper revolution was addressed repeatedly by both sides. It drew upon a debate that preceded the change of power and that contrasted the dickering of indecisive bureaucrats against the action of resolute revolutionaries. On 22 October, the Bolshevik central organ noted that the SRs had responded to Bolshevik plans for an 'action' (*vystuplenie*) on 25 October with calls for the reworking of preliminary directives in various subcommissions: 'the Bolsheviks stand for decisive measures and the SRs promise to make quiet drafts of everything'.[38] It had earlier noted that 'socialist' ministers in the Provisional Government, such as the Georgian Menshevik Iraklii Tseretelli, were characterized by their empty chatter rather than action: 'It is difficult to make him finish reading his innumerable speeches, which are largely without content and trivial, really saying nothing.'[39]

After the change of power, the early issues of *Pravda* and *Sotsial-demokrat* were replete with the decrees and proclamations being issued by the new Bolshevik government and the Second Congress of Soviets, offered as vivid proof to the population that this new power was not the ineffectual power of the Provisional Government, but was rather in a state of feverish activity. The Mensheviks drew analogies between this flood of Bolshevik activity and the earlier posturings of the Provisional Government. The Bolshevik lists of newly appointed ministers, according to *Rabochaia gazeta*, were 'empty paper, for citizen "ministers" who have only recently appeared cannot simply take state power. It slips from their hands because around them is emptiness, created by themselves; because they are isolated from everybody.'[40] The Bolsheviks responded to these attacks that the Congress decrees were 'paper decrees, resolutions "without force and meaning"'. While acknowledging that the decrees had still to be put into effect, they argued that the 'more the force of the revolutionary power grows, the easier it will be to put its revolutionary decrees into effect'.[41]

Such pledges notwithstanding, the Bolshevik representation of the events of October indeed seemed to lack color and passion. Terse announcements of the occupation of strategic points around Petrograd lacked a clear focus that could be used to distill for the public in emotive terms the essential elements of the October Revolution that were so publicly deemed missing by the opposition press. They lacked, in short, a Bastille. It was perhaps not surprising that the Bolshevik narrative-in-the-making still lacked coherence at this early stage. The opposition press in a sense had the easier task at this early stage, their criticisms being piecemeal responses to what they regarded as upstart claims by the Bolsheviks to have led a revolution. They merely had to represent the 'action' as devoid of the meaning the Bolsheviks were trying to ascribe to it. The Bolsheviks, though, had to 'make things mean'.

Attempts were made in the Bolshevik newspapers to portray Smol'nyi, the seat of the new government, as a focal point of the October Revolution. *Pravda* attempted to depict it as the nerve center of the revolution, all therein governed by the 'spirit of strict proletarian discipline'. In a symbolic representation of the future new society, the article referred to the 'lively, seething life' inside Smol'nyi that could be seen on the ground floor where the grass-roots elements of the revolution – the post office, transport department, sentry rooms, factory-planning committees – were located. It extended up to the third floor, it continued, which housed the 'battle centers' of the revolution.[42] Nonetheless, as a static site of action, it still lacked the dramatic possibilities offered by a discrete, dynamic event. It also ran the risk of appearing to be too much a Bolshevik-centered and isolated operation.

The Winter Palace as a site of contestation

As the seat of the Provisional Government where Menshevik and SR representatives served, the Winter Palace was an obvious early focus of attention for those arguing the narrative of conspiracy. By emphasizing its 'seizure' by 'conspirators', they attempted to create a powerful and emotive symbol for their story. This use contrasted sharply with the early laconic Bolshevik accounts of the 'taking' (*vziatie*) of the palace.[43] Only later would the Bolsheviks attempt to represent the 'taking' of the palace as a popular storming (*shturm*). Like all events, the storming of the Winter Palace as revolutionary tableau would take time to create, both in the early anti-Bolshevik and the later Bolshevik narratives.

Early Menshevik reports stressed both the overwhelming superiority of the Bolshevik forces surrounding the Palace, and the resolute determination of those inside, the junkers in particular, to defend it. There were reports that these stouthearted defenders successfully repelled attempts to take the Palace by force late on 25 October.[44] Maxim Gorky's *Novaia zhizn'* chronicled the change in the mood of the Provisional Government between 25 and 26 October from one of determination to 'nip in the bud using the most energetic methods' any attempt to seize power, to one of resignation in the face of superior forces.[45] On 26 October, an early Menshevik report noted the decision of the besieged Provisional Government not to 'submit to any illegal demand', and referred to the small number of the Bolsheviks involved in the attempted coup and their isolation from the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, the SRs and the Mensheviks. The report also implied that the interest of the masses in this Bolshevik action was little more than curiosity aroused by the sound of gunfire at the palace late in the evening. Significantly, it further implied, the masses were intentionally being kept away by the Bolsheviks: 'From all streets, crowds of the curious came in the direction of the Winter Palace, but they were prevented from passing any further by order of the troops of the soviet, since the pickets there allowed nobody through.'[46]

Not only was the conspiracy devoid of any popular support, such articles implied, but the Bolsheviks themselves kept the masses away from their 'revolution'. Such articles were, of course, arguing the inherent illegitimacy of the Bolshevik actions. The February Revolution had been 'historically necessary', in the words of *Rabochaia gazeta,* because it was 'irresistible, in as much as at a given place and at a given time no rational and social forces can stop or hold back the given movement'. The 'October events', on the other hand, were precisely the opposite, because the Bolsheviks 'made the October "revolution", and it will suffer the fate of all those revolutions which are scheduled and made on a particular day at a particular hour'.[47]

Once the palace had fallen, the Mensheviks and SRs could no longer use it to depict a brave, stouthearted resistance of the legitimate government to the illegitimate Bolsheviks. Instead, in this counter to the Bolshevik representation of the events as revolution, they stressed rather the hollowness of the palace's resistance in the face of overwhelming odds. In addition to stressing the isolated nature of the event - both in terms of the isolation of the Bolsheviks from any popular support and the physical isolation of the Winter Palace from the masses - the opposition began to emphasize the absence of an opponent in the palace that merited a revolutionary overthrow: Cossacks unwilling to fight to defend the palace, anxiety and growing confusion on everybody's faces, a government talking endlessly, in short a 'paralysis of power'.[48] The premature announcement by the Military Revolutionary Committee (VRK) in the morning of 25 October that the Provisional Government had fallen was typical of Bolshevik lies, wrote *Delo naroda,* as was the unworthy seizure of the Winter Palace which would, it implied, soon be rewritten by the Bolsheviks in tones more flattering to them:

> They can be proud of their victory, which of course will quickly be inscribed in golden letters on the tableau of the history of the Russian Revolution. They just moved the Red Guards, the armored cars, the destroyers, cruisers . . . against a women's battalion and small groups of junkers. Is this not a shameful business?[49]

For the most part, the soldiers who entered the palace exercised little 'revolutionary restraint', plundering everything in sight, and wine in particular.[50] *Delo naroda* singled out Nikolai Podvoiskii, the leader of the VRK, to illustrate the absence of behavior worthy of the term 'revolutionary'. S. Postnikov recalled him just before the February Revolution pleading in tears with a Tsarist official in

Petrograd not to exile him to a provincial town and assuring the official that he would desist from political activity. Postnikov remembered with disgust 'this "revolutionary" who for a warm little spot in Petrograd disavowed everything he believed in'. It was not surprising, therefore, that Podvoiskii 'while staying in the shadows, deceitfully ordered the soldiers to battle and conducted a war with a women's battalion'.[51] The narrative of conspiracy could accommodate only insincere and unscrupulous individuals who, by purporting to be revolutionaries, merely damaged the reputation of the 'true' revolutionary.

The spoils of the battle

The stakes were high in this contestation. The victorious side would have the power literally to reshape the very elements of society to its own design.[52] It would furnish people with the very language for them to identify themselves with this new state.[53] Percipient contemporary critics of October as revolution read only negative portents in this new language. S. Zagorskii concluded about the revolutionary experience from February through October that:

> our revolution long ago already turned into one continuous mass meeting (*miting*). Everyone is having meetings all the time, for any reason, they talk, talk, talk incessantly, without stopping, without end, floods of words flow all around the country, drowning out any thought, stifling reason, paralyzing action. And it is no wonder that old stable notions are drowned in this verbal flood, some are replaced with others, any content of the words being spoken disappears, their force is deadened.[54]

I. O. Levin wrote on 26 October 1917 that a 'real revolution' involved not only the destruction of the old system, but the creation of 'new political-social forms of state power'. Moreover, the paralysis of state power in both February and October meant that no serious opposition to the new power existed. While the events of 27 February to 2 March might have had the appearance of revolution, in reality 'no kind of revolution had taken place and . . . all political parties more or less unsuccessfully rushed to assign to what had happened the character of a revolution in the spirit of this or that political program'.[55] By this definition, he implied, *neither* February nor October constituted true revolutions.

By removing the framework of revolution from the discussion, Levin was free to dismiss the *narod* as an amorphous, passive mass in terms that approached the condescension of the most virulently anti-Bolshevik foreign accounts of the time. The revolutionary pretensions of the Mensheviks and SRs largely precluded any direct attacks on the masses themselves for obvious reasons; they preferred to focus instead on the illegitimate nature of the small band of conspirators and its deluding of the masses. Levin, on the other hand, was free to criticize all pretenders. All of the left-socialist parties, he maintained, were involved in this process of coining social labels and terms and imbuing them with any meaning their causes required:

> the whole time there was a kind of striving, shocking in its thoughtlessness (*legkomyslie*), to represent the illiterate peasant and worker mass of Russia as the vanguard of socialism and the bearers of precisely those revolutionary-socialist constructions, irreproachable in their theoretical purity, which were created in the émigré circles of Zurich and Paris.[56]

In Russia, Levin wrote, the political parties make of the peasant and the worker what they will: 'the former is a socialist revolutionary, the latter a menshevik, bolshevik, internationalist, unified social-democrat and so on, and the soldier . . . does not want to fight because he is an adherent of the Zimmerwald-Kienthal resolution on the war.' The very phrase 'revolutionary army' was a 'mockery of reality', because the refusal of soldiers of the Petrograd garrison to shoot on the crowds was in fact merely a reluctance to continue the war.[57] This refusal was not, Levin implied, informed by any revolutionary design. Similarly, 'the people' was frequently being endowed by the 'so called intelligentsia' 'with revolutionary traits that it did not and could not possibly possess'.[58] Such a dismissal of the masses was not unique to Levin. In his diary entry of 20 November 1917, the publicist V. G. Korolenko described a scene of excess and abandon in Bakhmach by the 'abominable' crowd. The drunkenness and thievery of the masses after electoral success by the Bolsheviks there was somehow to be expected, and was contrasted with the 'real horror' of the 'semi-*intelligenty*' (telegraph workers, railroad workers, civil service officials, and so on) who bought and took home the wine plundered by the masses.[59]

If the terms were constructions, Levin certainly recognized their potential power, and hence their danger. Agreeing with Levin, Petr Struve argued that the events of 1917 could not be given the 'honorable title' of revolution, because they constitute 'a soldiers' rebellion [*bunt*], taken "from politics" by the intelligentsia of the country for revolution, in the hope of turning a rebellion into a revolution'.[60] Herein lay their fear of the Bolshevik takeover. As Levin put it:

> The fact that our popular masses have now mastered in an extremely simplified spirit the slogan of class struggle and are saturated in truly cannibalistic hatred towards the 'bourgeois', is without doubt a historical advantage for those parties which formed and supported the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies and organizations similar to them. In this respect, all the left socialist parties, the SD Mensheviks, SRs and so on, in reality were no better than the Bolsheviks, by whom they were led around the whole time, even though they fought them with words.[61]

These observers clearly understood the stakes of this contestation over the meaning of October. For all their sophisticated insights, however, none could match the succinctness of Gippius's very Russian dismissal of this '"matter of revolution" (*t'fu, t'fu*!)'.[62]

In the ten years following this initial contestation in the press, the Bolshevik regime continued to argue revolution in a variety of mutually reinforcing ways. As this process took shape, those who argued the narrative of conspiracy were placed at a disadvantage for a variety of reasons. Firstly, they argued it from a weak position in terms of brute political power. Secondly, forced and voluntary emigration of its proponents ensured that it was argued for the most part from outside Soviet Russia, from the émigré centers of Europe, where it acquired its own dynamic and influence. Thirdly, the representation of the October events as conspiracy was essentially a *reactive* representation defined by the Bolshevik representation of these events as revolution. It could draw on no pre-existing tradition of valiant human striving and suffering symbolized in the revolutionary tradition invoked by the Bolsheviks. Unlike the narrative of revolution, it embodied no transcendent meaning and could conjure no tradition of emotive symbols and images. Whereas the former, if successful, could be used to convey drama, passion and emotion, to make people *experience* purpose and possibly recast their very autobiographies, the latter could convey only sterility, adventurism and purposelessness. These limitations were most in evidence in the generally unsuccessful attempts by those arguing conspiracy to emplot a tragic rape of the Winter Palace as a counter to the partially successful representation of the storming of the Winter Palace. At its most successful, the conspiracy narrative could render the October events as just another ultimately futile attempt to seize power, on a par with the July Days and the Kornilov affair. The poet Aleksandr Blok conveyed beautifully the different possibilities of the competing stories being told about these events:

> What has been conceived? To change everything. To make everything so that everything becomes new; so that our deceitful, dirty, boring, ugly life becomes just, pure, happy and wonderful. When such intentions, from time immemorial ensconced in the human soul, in the people's soul, break apart the chains shackling them and burst forth in a turbulent stream, bursting dams, washing away the superfluous parts of the banks, – this is called revolution. Anything less, more moderate, more base, is called rebellion, riot. But this is called revolution. It is akin to nature.[63]

Notes

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1 Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 41.

2 See, especially, Hayden White, 'The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory', in Hayden White, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 26–57; Louis O. Mink, 'Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument', in Henry Kozicki and Robert H. Canary, eds, *The Writing of History. Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, 1978), pp. 129–49.

3 White has pointed out the role of the historian's *personal* desire for coherence in the construction of a historical narrative of the past (Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality' in White, *The Content of the Form*, p. 4). Historians frequently use the passive voice in their narratives in order to 'remove' themselves and their biases from the history. Historians also sustain the illusion of [re]construction by frequent use of the preterite tense to imply a past event in a causal chain. This latter point is Roland Barthes', as discussed in Régine Robin, 'Toward Fiction as Oblique Discourse', *Yale French*

Studies, no. 59 (1980), p. 231. For more on the historian's role in the creation of the narrative, see Hans Kellner, *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked* (Madison, 1989).

4 Roland Barthes, 'The Discourse of History' in *The Rustle of Language* (New York, 1986), p. 131.

5 White, 'The Value of Narrativity', p. 1.

6 Sahlins offers the following useful definition of event: 'An event becomes such as it is interpreted. Only as it is appropriated in and through the cultural scheme does it acquire an historical significance' (Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985), p. xiv).

7 This idea has been particularly upsetting to historians of the Holocaust, who have been rightly loath to provide any ammunition for the so-called revisionists and have offered some of the most insistent affirmations of the inviolability of historical fact: 'writers and readers of Holocaust narrative have long insisted that it literally deliver documentary evidence of specific events, that it come not to stand for the destruction, or merely point toward it, but that it be received as testimonial proof of the events it embodies' (James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington, 1990), p. 10). Even among those historians who would concede that the written word is structured and edited by narrative conventions, as one scholar points out, the all-important *oral* testimony is still regarded as unmediated truth (Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, 'Representing Auschwitz', *History & Memory*, v. 7, no. 2 (1996), p. 135). In the poignant and emotional area of Holocaust studies, the idea of narrative contestation has not only epistemological and historiographical dimensions, but ethical, moral even professional ones as well (cf. the personal overtones of the critique of Hayden White in Carlo Ginzburg's contribution to Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 82–96).

8 On this, see the interesting comments by Robert Braun, 'The Holocaust and Problems of Historical Representation', *History and Theory*, v. 33, no. 2 (1994), pp. 172–97.

9 'The world, as the domain of the historically real, is neither text nor narrative. But it is to systems of signs, to language and discourse, that we must turn in order to assign meaning and value to these objects, actions, and events. Occur they will; their interpretation, though, invokes the full power of our cultural system' (Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington, 1991), p. 110).

10 Martin Jay, 'Of Plots, Witnesses, and Judgments', in Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation*, p. 103.

11 As Richard Stites astutely notes, the mythologized Storming of the Winter Palace has remained 'a truncated narrative lacking the orgiastic release that drama would require' (Richard Stites, 'The Origins of Soviet Ritual Style: Symbol and Festival in the Russian Revolution', in Claes Arvidsson and Lars Erik Blomqvist, eds, *Symbols of Power: the Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Stockholm, Sweden, 1987), pp. 29–30); for more on the reasons behind this, see Frederick C. Corney, 'Writing October: History, Memory, Identity and the Construction

of the Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1927' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1997), ch. 4.

12 For a fascinating study of the preparation in the second half of the eighteenth century of the Bastille as a site symbolic of the evils of the Old Regime, of its reconstitution as a symbol of liberation after 1789, and of the different political inflections accorded the terms 'Bastille' and '14 July' at various times and in various places, see Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt, *Die Bastille. Zur Symbolgeschichte von Herrschaft und Freiheit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990).

13 This aspect is a focus of my dissertation, 'Writing October'.

14 This tradition would not have existed without the very term 'revolution', as Baker has pointed out, first undergoing its own revolution. It emerged from the Enlightenment no longer meaning a negative process of disruption and bloodletting but rather 'a more profound process of transformation, an advance of the human mind frequently qualified in such positive terms as "juste", "serieuse", "grande" '. (Keith Michael Baker, 'Revolution', in Colin Lucas, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture. Volume 2: The Political Culture of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1988), p. 50). It should be noted that many of the revolutionary precedents invoked in the service of the October Revolution were themselves recast in the process. Hutton has noted, for example, that the Paris Commune of 1871 was 'too short-lived and harried by adversity to acquire clear definition' at the time, implying that its subsequent sharper definition derived from those who invoked it and from their hopes 'for what it might have been' (Patrick H. Hutton, *The Cult of the Revolutionary Tradition. The Blanquists in French Politics, 1864–1893* (Berkeley, 1981), p. 13).

15 Historians have argued long over the significance of the various revolutionary precedents invoked by contemporaries. The influence of the 'mythology of the European Revolutions', most notably the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, on the political, social and cultural life of Russia in the first year after October 1917 is examined by G. I. Il'ina, 'Obraz evropeiskikh revoliutsii i russkaia kul'tura (mart 1917 g. – noiabr' 1918 g.)' in *Anatomiia revoliutsii. 1917 god v Rossii: massy, partii, vlast'* (St. Petersburg, 1994), pp. 383–93. The ways in which shifting political conditions in the USSR since 1920 changed the analogies drawn between 1789 and 1917 are discussed in Michel Vovelle, '1789–1917: The Game of Analogies' in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture. Volume 4: The Terror* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 349–78. Others caution against 'superimposing the Russian Revolution on the French Revolution', but nonetheless argue that the French example had an enormous impact on the formation of a 'pre-existing revolutionary mentality' in Russia (see Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins. Itinéraire des analogies* (Paris, 1989), pp. 245, 247). François Furet is most apposite here: 'The Bolsheviks were given Jacobin ancestors, and the Jacobins were made to anticipate the communists' (François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge and Paris, 1981), p. 6. Also, Dmitry Shlapentokh, *The French Revolution and the Russian Anti-democratic Tradition: a Case of False Consciousness* (New

Brunswick, NJ, 1997); Astrid von Borcke, *Die Ursprünge des Bolschewismus. Die jakobinische Tradition in Rußland und die Theorie der revolutionären Diktatur* (Munich, 1977).

16 Jay, 'Of Plots', p. 99. Also Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust.*

17 Martin Malia, 'Why Amalrik was right', *Times Literary Supplement,* 6 November 1992, p. 9; also idem, *The Soviet Tragedy: a History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York, 1994).

18 Baker, 'Revolution', p. 56. Baker is referring to the journal *Revolutions de Paris* which appeared in Paris in 1789. It began as a daily chronicle of events but its emphasis soon shifted to defining more clearly 'their structure and meaning' (ibid., p. 55).

19 V. I. Vernadskii, *Dnevniki 1917–1921* (Kiev, 1994), p. 28.

20 'Vsia vlast' Sovetam rabochikh, soldat i krestian – Mira! Khleba! Zemli!' *Rabochii put',* no. 45, 7 November (25 October), 1917, p. 1; 'Zakhvat vlasti bol'shevikami!' *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 196, 26 October 1917, p. 1; 'Bol'sheviki otdaiut' Rossiiu Vil'gel'mu', *Bor'ba,* no. 1, 10 November 1917, p. 1.

21 Albert Rhys Williams, *Through The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1921), p. 197.

22 'Ekstrennoe zasedanie Petrogradskago Soveta', *Rabochii put',* no. 46, 8 November (26 October) 1917, pp. 1–2.

23 'Bez vlasti', *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 198, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

24 'Voennyi zagovor', *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 196, 26 October 1917, p. 1.

25 'Grazhdanam Rossiiskoi Respubliki!' *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 197, 27 October 1917, p. 1.

26 'Revoliutsiia vostorzhestvovala', *Delo naroda,* no. 189, 26 October 1917, p. 1.

27 'Avantiura – ne revoliutsiia!' *Delo naroda,* no. 191, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

28 'Gde zagovor?' *Pravda* (*Rabochii put'*), 13 November (31 October) 1917, p. 1. Cf. 'Sobytiia v Moskve. "Kuchka bol'shevikov" ', *Sotsial-demokrat,* no. 198, 2 (15) November 1917, p. 2.

29 '"Voennyi zagovor" ili revoliutsiia!' *Pravda* (*Rabochii put'*), 14 November (1 November), 1917, p. 2.

30 Andrei Sinyavsky, *Soviet Civilization: a Cultural History* (New York, 1990), p. 16.

31 'Bez vlasti', *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 198, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

32 'Voennyi zagovor', *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 196, 26 October 1917, p. 1.

33 'Avantiura – ne revoliutsiia!' *Delo naroda,* no. 191, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

34 'Poslednaia popytka', *Rabochaia gazeta,* no. 200, 1 November 1917, p. 1. For a similar SR view, see 'Avantiura – ne revoliutsiia!' *Delo naroda,* no. 191, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

35 D. Zaslavskii, 'Vozstanie bez temperamenta', *Den',* no. 198, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

36 Zinaida Gippius, *Peterburgskie dnevniki 1914–1919* (New York, 1990), p. 207 (original emphasis).

37 D. Zaslavskii, 'Vozstanie bez temperamenta', *Den',* no. 198, 28 October 1917, p. 1.

38 'Obzor pechati. Ikh retsept', *Rabochii put'*, no. 43, 4 November (22 October), 1917, p. 1.
39 'Bumazhnye rezoliutsii', *Rabochii put'*, no. 2, 8 September (26 August), 1917, p. 1.
40 'Bez vlasti', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 198, 28 October 1917, p. 1.
41 'Revoliutsionnye dekrety,' *Pravda* (*Rabochii put'*), 13 November (31 October), 1917, p. 1.
42 'V Smol'nom', *Pravda*, no. 178, 16 November (3 November), 1917, p. 2.
43 At the time, the occupation of the palace was reported by the Bolsheviks in a single paragraph that conveyed the surgical nature of the occupation: few losses, the disciplined revolutionaries always in control, the town orderly (see 'Zimnii dvorets vziat', *Pravda*, no. 170, 9 November (27 October), 1917, p. 1). The rare more detailed report stressed the absence of 'genuine' support for the Provisional Government amongst its supposed defenders, the Cossacks and junkers both expressing to one eyewitness their reluctance to serve as cannon-fodder in the defense of the Winter Palace (G. Chudnovskii, 'V Zimnem dvortse pered sdachei', *Pravda*, no. 183, 21 November (8 November), 1917, p. 2).
44 'Poslednye izvestiia', *Rabochaia gazeta*, 26 October 1917, p. 3.
45 'V Zimnem dvortse', *Novaia zhizn'*, no. 163, 26 October (8 November), 1917, p. 2; 'Obstrel Zimniago Dvortsa', *Novaia zhizn'*, no. 163, 26 October (8 November), 1917, p. 2.
46 'V Zimnem dvortse', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 196, 26 October 1917, p. 3. Official delegations from the City Duma were also turned back, see 'Gorodskaia duma i Sov. Kr. Deputatov – reshaiut napravitsia k Zimnemu Dvortsu', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 196, 26 October 1917, p. 3; 'Poslednye izvestiia', *Rabochaia gazeta*, 26 October 1917, p. 3.
47 'Istoricheskaia neobkhodimost' illi istoricheskaia prestuplenie', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 207, 8 November 1917, p. 2.
48 A. Mikhailov, 'Posledniia minuty Zimniago dvortsa', *Novaia zhizn'*, no. 167, 30 October (12 November), 1917, p. 2; 'Kak zaniali Zimnii dvorets', *Delo naroda*, no. 193, 29 October 1917, pp. 1–2; 'Rasskaz zashchitnika Zimnego Dvortsa', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 197, 27 October 1917, p. 2.
49 'Prestuplenie u Zimniago dvortsa', *Delo naroda*, no. 190, 27 October 1917, p. 1.
50 N. R., 'Pod znamenem revoliutsii', *Rabochaia gazeta*, no. 200, 1 November 1917, p. 3. For a less negative account, see Larisa Reisner, 'V Zimnem dvortse', *Novaia zhizn'*, no. 178, 11 (24) November, 1917, p. 6.
51 S. Postnikov, 'Kto vel soldat na Zimnii dvorets? *Delo naroda*, no. 191, 28 October 1917, p. 1.
52 Fitzpatrick refers to a 'reclassing' of society, involving not only the ascription of class categories, but also the framing and construction of the bodies of information upon which historians would draw for their analyses of this society (Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class: the Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia', *Journal of Modern History*, v. 65 [1993], pp. 745–70).
53 'October was a workers' revolution', writes Stephen Kotkin, 'because notions of class and workers were institutionalized and became the basis for conceiving and justifying the new state's policies' (Stephen Kotkin,

'"One Hand Clapping": Russian Workers and 1917', *Labor History*, v. 32, no. 4 (1991), pp. 618–19).

54 S. Zagorskii, 'Zabytie istiny', *Den'*, no. 201 (1650), 7 November 1917, p. 1.

55 I. O. Levin, 'Nekotorye itogi', *Russkaia mysl'*, book 11/12, 1917, pp. 51–2.

56 Levin, 'Nekotorye itogi', p. 54. By way of illustration, Levin drew an analogy with the masquerades during the French Revolution in which, for want of genuine Chinese, Persians and Hindus, Parisian boys dressed in exotic costumes were used in their stead to greet the Convention.

57 Levin, 'Nekotorye itogi', p. 52.

58 Levin, 'Nekotorye itogi', p. 53. Also, Petr Struve, 'V chem revoliutsiia i kontr-revoliutsiia? Neskol'ko zamechaniia po povodu stat'i I. O. Levina', *Russkaia mysl'*, book 11/12, 1917, pp. 57–61.

59 V. G. Korolenko, 'Dnevniki (1917–1921)', *Voprosy literatury*, no. 6, June 1990, p. 215.

60 Petr Struve, 'V chem revoliutsiia i kontr-revoliutsiia? Neskol'ko zamechanii po povodu stat'i I. O. Levina', *Russkaia mysl'*, book 11/12, 1917, p. 57. Struve had expressed such sentiments as a member of the *Vekhi* group in 1909 in relation to the intellectuals of revolutionary France. He criticized them for failing to convert the 'rumble' of the popular masses into the 'conscious, articulate sounds of the national identity', instead tacking their 'own abbreviated and pedantic formulas onto it. When the rumble subsided, these formulas were left hanging in the air' (P. Struve, 'The Intelligentsia and Revolution', *Landmarks* (New York, 1977), pp. 147–8).

61 Levin, 'Nekotorye itogi', p. 55.

62 Gippius, *Peterburgskie dnevniki*, p. 191.

63 A. Blok, 'Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia', in A. Blok, *Iskusstvo i revoliutsiia* (Moscow, 1979), p. 221.

10

Victim Talk: Defense Testimony and Denunciation under Stalin

Golfo Alexopoulos

In 1929, the leader of the Central Executive Committee, Mikhail I. Kalinin, described the consequences of disenfranchising the so-called exploiting, non-laboring elements: 'This isn't simply deprivation of voting rights; it means depriving [someone] of all rights . . . For us now, being deprived of voting rights is like being deprived of life . . .'[1] Although disenfranchisement was a highly repressive policy by the late 1920s, many alleged that their neighbors and co-workers possessed the identity of persons who deserved to be disenfranchised. Party and state officials were not the only ones who accused people of being members of the exploiting classes; ordinary individuals accused others of belonging to the state's enemy group as well. Even more striking, however, is the fact that the victims of Soviet policy, those already disenfranchised, participated in marking others. In their petitions for the reinstatement of rights, the disenfranchised (or *lishentsy*) sometimes identified others as alien and anti-Soviet elements and, in this way, reproduced and legitimized the repressive policy to which they themselves fell victim.[2] This study examines how a particular response of Stalin's victims had the effect of transforming them from mere pawns to participant agents in the system of repression.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the disenfranchised often claimed that they were deprived of rights because someone denounced them in person or in writing, and there is evidence to support their suspicions.[3] What is less apparent is that they went before Soviet officials with accusations of another's wrongdoing as well. The disenfranchised occasionally included damaging accusations against others in their petitions for the reinstatement of rights, a testimony of defense addressed to state officials. These accusations against others are highly particular, that is, they are embedded in narratives of self which were offered by the disenfranchised in their attempts to regain rights. Here, the disenfranchised named others as the state's true enemy in the process of asserting their own innocence. The denunciations which appear in some of the more desperate autobiographical narratives from the disenfranchised might have been motivated in large part by malice, revenge or the desire to present oneself as a good patriot and citizen, but it appears that they emerged primarily in a context of the victim's self-fashioning.[4]

Why would the disenfranchised, who were so often the subjects of false accusation, point a finger of blame in turn? For them, the practice of making damaging accusations against others before state officials appears to have been motivated by the desire to assert the identity of a victim. When speaking to Soviet authorities, the disenfranchised identified themselves as victims of exploiters and included the image of a guilty other as a way of enhancing their presentation of an innocent self. If the state accused them of being powerful exploiters who have victimized others and sabotaged economic progress, the disenfranchised responded by saying 'Don't blame me. I'm the real victim here.'[5] According to their testimonies, those who had the misfortune of being disenfranchised were not exploiters but just the opposite, that is, they suffered because of another's exploitation.

Thus it appears that a kind of casual denunciation was offered in the early Soviet period by certain victims of repression who chose to invoke the official image of an enemy in order to enhance their own self-image as an innocent.[6] The defense testimony which focused on the writer's identity as victim was intended to secure the official reader's sympathy and attention, and relieve the disenfranchised of responsibility and blame.[7] The usefulness of invoking the image of an enemy in the context of defense testimony is clear – descriptions of another's manipulations and wrongdoing served to enhance the writer's own self-image as a victim, someone weak and exploited. It appears that certain denunciatory practices in Soviet Russia were at times motivated by the demands of self-portraiture. In the case of the disenfranchised, damaging accusations against others were made in the process of victim talk.

Appeals and accusations

Soon after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik leadership identified certain distinct groups of people as anti-Soviet elements, individuals believed to be inherently disloyal to the regime and potentially subversive of it. Soviet law classified the disenfranchised as former Tsarist officials, traders and middlemen, those who used hired labor or lived off unearned income, religious servitors of all denominations and their dependent family members, as well as persons administratively exiled, sentenced by a court to deprivation of rights, or mentally ill.[8] This highly diverse group, which included former White Army officers together with petty criminals and widows who rented a room in their home, were also described by the regime (rather misleadingly) as class enemies, the privileged and exploiting classes, and non-laboring elements. In the intensive years of disenfranchisement 1929–31, the majority of those who were stripped of rights were punished for economic transgressions – hiring labor, living off unearned income, trading.[9] The voices heard in the following pages are largely from this majority group.

The disenfranchised were denied not simply voting rights but a broad range of political and economic rights, such as the right to employment and a pension, and they were also vulnerable to severe criminal sanction and deportation. Still, many of them managed to defy their non-citizen status in a number of ways. Some survived as self-employed contractors, performing such jobs as roofer and painter, mechanic, domestic worker and courier.[10] Others moved away from the communities which knew them, concealed their damaging identities, settled into new occupations and acquired working-class credentials.[11] Many made direct appeals to Soviet officials by visiting the reception room (*priemnaia*) of Kalinin or the local soviet and submitting petitions for the reinstatement of rights.[12] These written appeals flooded Soviet institutions during the years of intensive disenfranchisement, 1926–36. One official noted in 1929 that 'no one wants to be disenfranchised so they all file petitions for their reinstatement [of rights]'.[13]

The process of petitioning for the reinstatement of rights was governed by explicit guidelines and these must have been widely known among the disenfranchised.[14] For the same law which spelled out the process of disenfranchisement addressed the subject of rehabilitation as well and those who became the law's victims took special interest in its provisions. The official guidelines stated rather clearly that the reinstatement of rights was reserved for those who either (1) asserted a reformed Soviet self, that is, demonstrated loyalty and service to Soviet power; or (2) claimed that they had been wrongly disenfranchised, that is, that they only used hired labor because they were ill or they temporarily engaged in petty trade because they were unemployed. On the surface, it might appear that the disenfranchised did more to lend legitimacy to Bolshevik policy and reveal their own compliance with it when they took the first approach, accepted their classification and asserted a renewed loyalty and a history of enthusiastic service to Soviet power. Yet this does not appear to be the case.

When they claimed wrongful disenfranchisement, petitioners reproduced and sustained Bolshevik policy as well, but in a less benign form. In the process of trying to persuade Soviet officials that they had been wrongly classified (and most of the disenfranchised took this approach), petitioners made various appeals to the policy itself. The disenfranchised supported and legitimized Bolshevik policy by invoking it in their own defense, that is, by drawing a sharp distinction between themselves and the kinds of people whom the state properly identified as enemies.

Making distinctions

When people have been charged with belonging to a particular social category, then their defense testimony will dispute not only their actions but their identity or character as well.[15] Thus it is no surprise that the petition for the reinstatement of rights was primarily a self-portrait. Since the petitioner was condemned for having the identity of a privileged person or exploiter, he or she challenged the damaging classification by presenting an opposite identity – that of a weak victim – and often used comparisons and counterexamples to sharpen or enhance this self-portrait.

In their appeals for the reinstatement of rights, the disenfranchised described themselves as unfortunate victims and included with their description an accompanying image of who really should have been the policy's target. At times, references to anti-Soviet elements were general and broad. For example, some petitioners simply compared their petty trading activity which was motivated by desperation to the activities of rich, 'real, big-time exploiters, factory owners and landlords'[16] and expressed resentment that such people were rehabilitated, held prestigious government jobs, or otherwise lived normally.[17] In his letter to the peasant newspaper, *Krest'ianskaia gazeta*, one man expressed his outrage at being placed 'on the black list together with priests and bandits'.[18] No less offended was an exiled group of self-proclaimed 'Bolshevik-Leninist oppositionists' who were offended at being identified 'on the list of *lishentsy* together with the gendarme, White Army officers, kulaks and other counter-revolutionary swine'.[19] In these cases, petitioners do not name specific persons but simply invoke the image of a crafty exploiter who avoids punishment while 'the little guy' suffers. The one making the appeal is featured in the prominent position of the true enemy's opposite. For example, petitioners often refer either to someone who deserved to be disenfranchised as compared with the writer who did not, or someone who did not deserve to be rehabilitated as compared with the writer who did.

The profitable and the petty

In the legislation, some of the categories of disenfranchised persons were defined by the scale of activity, and this prompted many of the disenfranchised to oppose themselves to others and argue, 'I am poorer than him' or 'not as profitable as them'. Since making an argument of degrees involved positioning oneself along a continuum, an act which invited comparison, it appears that the act of condemning another was almost intrinsic to the process of presenting an innocent self, as in the following appeal from a Moscow man deprived of rights for using hired labor.

> I, who all my life... worked as an excavator [*zemlekop*], as a wage laborer [*chernorabochii*], a worker in shipping cargo, a carter [*lomovoi izvozchik*] just to feed my family. What kind of exploiter am I? Is there anything in common between me, who spent his whole life in heavy manual labor and real, large-scale exploiters, factory-owners, landowners, shopkeepers like kulaks who live rich and satiated on account of others, while I survive on bread and water? Can Soviet power in spirit apply the same standard to me as to them?[20]

Petition-writers also described how they, illiterate and incapable, were unable to 'set themselves up' under the new order, while those better educated, with the means and foresight to accommodate themselves to Soviet power and adapt to new circumstances (*prispo-*

sablivat'sia) avoided becoming its victims.[21] In an anonymous letter to Stalin, one man complained about the fate of poor, petty street vendors like himself who were being disenfranchised. The writer described these petty merchants as unfortunate, miserable, working on their own and without hired labor. They trade 'in a tiny booth like a parrot in a cage and carry their goods on their back like a pauper'. Citing their miserable income and their harmlessness, the writer implores Stalin to distinguish the 'barefoot trader' (*torgovets-bosiak*) from the otherwise contemptible trader. Those who are still on the streets trading, the writer claims, are those so poor and unskilled that they have no other choice but to trade. In sharp contrast to them, the wealthy and educated former traders were smart and capable enough to find other work or otherwise take advantage of the Soviet system. He explains:

> And all the former people [*byvshie liudi*] before the revolution and now are rolling in the dough [*kupalis' syr v masle i seichas kupaiutsia*]. Since they are better educated and understood the future perfectly they tried not to trade and instead found a position for themselves in institutions, while paupers like myself kept on trading and were left not only without other work but even without bread. Meanwhile, the former people live and work just like they did before 1917, and some of them are even too old to work and are collecting aid from the Soviet government.[22]

There was an official image of the anti-Soviet element circulating at this time – one who hides his or her true identity, is hostile to Soviet power and the working class, who worms into Soviet institutions and deliberately subverts or undermines Soviet policy. This official image often appeared in the petitions of the disenfranchised as the person who should be condemned compared to the writer who should not. At the same time, a different image was also constructed by the policy's victims, a villain not for Soviet power but for those writing. Sneaky, sinister, manipulative others were given prominent roles alongside the weak and vulnerable petitioner. Defense often took the form of an accusation when the disenfranchised constructed their identity in a relational way and defined themselves against an enemy other.

The forgiven and the forgotten

Those who had not yet been reinstated in rights complained about others, less deserving than they, who had. For example: 'If exploiters and other non-laboring elements are being reinstated in voting rights... then I see no legal basis for disenfranchising me.'[23] 'I suffer for nothing and many who are better off than me have long since been reinstated in voting rights.'[24] Complaints about the rehabilitation of those who truly deserved to be disenfranchised often made reference to specific persons, and here the denunciation emerges. Certain individuals came to mind when petitioners wondered why they were having difficulty being reinstated in rights. A former trader compared himself to Sergei, a man who shares certain characteristics with the 'real' enemy described in the petition of the barefoot trader above. Namely, Sergei has the means and know-how to work the system to his advantage:

> Sergei Ivanov Vashin traded until 1928 and large-scale, rank three.[25] He's been reinstated in rights and now works. There are many other examples of people who have been reinstated and the comparison with me is like night and day [*kak nebo ot zemli*]. Maybe they've been reinstated because they have the means to go to the region [*oblast'*] and even to TsIK and make a fuss [*khlopotat'*], but if I don't have the means [to do that too], I think it's unjust that I should be disenfranchised.[26]

More damaging, and indeed of greater significance, are references such as these because here the disenfranchised do more than simply reproduce Bolshevik policy in the abstract. They not only make a general distinction between themselves and a real enemy of the 'ideal type', but they actually named others as the state's true enemy.

Naming the real enemy

In order to convey their own poverty and powerlessness, the disenfranchised not only invoked the image of a rich and manipulative other, but even identified him by name. For example, one former psalmodist rebuked the secretary and chairman of the rural soviet in his petition and not only provided their names but described them as sons of priests and persons who concealed their true identity and used hired labor.[27] A man denied that he used hired labor and insisted that, in fact, others (whose names he provided) hired him for many years.[28] One woman rather casually compared her small-scale trading to that of the former tea shop owner, Mikhail Aleksandrov, who traded extensively (*vo vsiu shir'*).[29] Thus, the practice of marking enemies was extended rather than mitigated by the promise of rehabilitation, as the range of people engaged in this practice of identifying enemies broadened to include those already disenfranchised.[30]

The villain and the vulnerable

In the process of affirming their own innocence, the disenfranchised at times transferred guilt or blame onto another. Far from being privileged exploiters themselves, petitioners claim to be the victims of other exploiters who are still unmarked and on the loose. For example, psalmodists often described themselves as poor, exploited servants of the priest;[31] and a Leningrad man deprived of rights for trading pointed the finger of blame at others who took advantage of him. He claimed he was living in the old apartment of Kostomarov, the son of a marshal of the nobility (*predvoditel' dvorianstva*). Kostomarov was not pleased about this new resident in his apartment and issued countless legal suits to have the Leningrad man evicted. Finally, the former nobleman conspired with the house manager, Perov, to make trouble. As the story is told, the petitioner engaged in trade only as the result of his enemies' machinations, two men whose own identities were themselves spoiled and suspect.

> Kostomarov, seeing that you don't get rid of me with court action, together with the manager Perov who, by the way, was in the past the owner of a wallpaper shop and who is a good friend of Kostomarov, took advantage of my ambiguous [*neopredelennyi*] situation and arranged that I would buy and sell things and be the co-proprietor of a kind of trading firm, etc., even do money-lending.[32]

A woman accused of trading condemned Iakob, who she claimed served in the Tsarist police, for filing the trading license in her name.[33] It was he who deserved punishment while she was an innocent victim of his manipulation:

> In 1929 a certain former policeman [*podriadchii*], Iakob Stepanovich Kukshchrov, took a rank three license out in my name for a cafe [*kofe-stolovaia*] and the actual proprietor of the coffee shop was the former bourgeois Kukshchrov. Although the license was in my name, Kukshchrov got all the profits from the cafe... and exploited me in every way. Under my name the bourgeois hid himself... because of him I served time in jail...[34]

It was the proprietor of the tea shop in Ostrov who brought one woman mischief. She lived with her son after being fired from her job, but soon noticed that her son's meager earnings were not enough to support the two of them. She found work in a tea shop where the owner, Fedorov, manipulated her.

> They didn't let Fedorov trade any more and then he said to me, 'You want to work and you don't want to starve?' He suggested I take out a license to trade in my name, and as someone semi-literate I wanted to feed myself and help my children so I decided to take the license, although I worked as an employee. But when literate people told me, 'Why did you take a license out in your name? You wash the floors and he doesn't do anything but stand at the buffet with his wife.'[35]

Since the purpose of testimony was to challenge the charge that the petitioner was 'one of them', the efforts that the disenfranchised made to include an image of the enemy in their narratives of self appear rather lackluster. If we consider that social identities are not innate but constructed in a relational way, then in a country which upheld an image of social polarization (the working class versus the exploiting class), and where denunciation was an available tool, accusations against others may have simply been a constituent feature of the construction of social identity in everyday life. Perhaps the act of making accusations against others was not an exceptional activity, but one in which people engaged in a rather perfunctory and mundane way as they asserted their own public identities.

At the least, it can be safely asserted that victim talk as a style of argument was all too familiar in the 1930s. Victim talk was practiced by the Soviet leadership which itself played the victim, sounding the alarm about ubiquitous enemies who subverted the process of socialist construction.[36] Indeed, the appeal to victimhood by the disenfranchised was persuasive not merely because many people were, in fact, being manipulated in the manner described in the stories above. Just as significant as the plausibility of these tales of exploitation was the fact that Soviet officials firmly believed in the presence of an exploiting class which was largely going unpunished.[37] Victim talk was persuasive because it was familiar to an official Soviet audience which shared the same stereotypes about the menacing exploiting classes.[38]

The question of consequences

Should the accusations which appear in petitions for the reinstatement of rights be characterized as a kind of throwaway line, a useful but ultimately benign rhetorical device, a far cry from a dangerous denunciation? While it is true that the petitions of the disenfranchised which include specific accusations against others are distinct from the denunciatory letters which were written in the 1930s and addressed to the secret police, one can hardly dismiss them as inconsequential.[39] Although these petitions were largely addressed to state officials rather than the secret police, those who received petitions for the reinstatement of rights did perform investigations and mete out punishments. These accusations did pass the desks of various officials with punitive powers, and local administrative organs who largely received petitions sometimes turned to the secret police for information on a petitioner's past activities.[40] Moreover, cases of disenfranchisement were sometimes investigated by court and procuracy officials following a petition of protest. For example, complaints bureaus, police and justice officials (the people's court, the justice section of the regional [*raion*] soviet, the procuracy) were sometimes involved in investigating and making a judgement concerning the disenfranchised person's family and housing circumstances, past activities, material possessions and forms of income.[41]

Moreover, some of the disenfranchised addressed their petitions specifically to local procuracy officials, and procuracy officials at times responded by investigating the writers' social position and the facts of their case, and submitting a protest to the local executive committee against the decision to disenfranchise.[42] In a petition for the reinstatement of rights which he addressed to the local procuracy, one man identified two individuals who lent him money for his trading business and noted 'my creditors have remained completely unpunished'.[43] Whether procuracy officials went after his creditors is unknown, but perhaps not altogether unlikely. Thus while there appears to be no direct evidence to suggest that the accusations which the disenfranchised made against others in their petitions resulted in anyone's punishment, this possibility cannot be ruled out. Given that these petitions were viewed by Soviet authorities with a variety of punitive powers – local officials, finance inspectors, procurators, members of the secret police and the Worker–Peasant Inspectorate – the accusations against others which appear in them were probably not entirely benign.

Conclusion

The accusations which appear in petitions for the reinstatement of rights illustrate how victims can become victimizers, and demonstrate that the damaging social identities of exploiter and manipulator were not only ascribed and propagated by the regime and those who occupied society's favored roles.[44] In fact, the victims of repression also contributed to the construction of an enemy when they offered written appeals and desperately argued their innocence. As the image of political enemy groups was recreated by the victims themselves, the disenfranchised helped to perpetuate the policy that condemned them. They may also have sustained a repressive policy by playing the victim. They may have contributed to their own oppression and reinforced the idea of political enemies by living this reality, by making victimhood and helplessness a key component of their identity and presenting themselves as powerless and defeated.[45]

Moreover, the disenfranchised sustained and legitimized Soviet repression by making use of the fact that those who were responsible for their disenfranchisement had been arrested by the state. For example, one man provided the names of those local officials responsible for his disenfranchisement who were later expelled from the Party and fired from their positions for committing excesses against the Party line.[46] Another blamed his disenfranchisement on the finance inspector who, he eagerly noted, was later jailed for various improprieties, including under-taxing the rich and over-taxing the poor.[47] A number of petitioners used the fact that their accusers had been arrested or otherwise subject to state sanction as proof of their own innocence. Surely, one's own guilt would be called into question when the key witness had been discredited by the state. The fact that the disenfranchised used the arrests of others in the service of their own self-defense is yet another illustration of how a repressive mechanism can be self-supportive and self-generating. Those who had already been disenfranchised were sometimes relieved to learn that their nemeses had become the state's enemies as well.

Finally, the disenfranchised also legitimized the practice of disenfranchisement by making the argument that they should be treated as an exception to its rules. By claiming exceptional status, they accepted the very idea of political vilification. For example, a man deprived of rights for serving in the Tsarist police argued that his was a special case and that he should be treated as an exception. As is evident from his testimony, the claim that one is an exception presupposes an acceptance of the rule and effectively reassures the audience that the system in place is justified and does work:

> I deeply realize the expediency of the general law on using repression against certain categories of citizens, in particular – against those who have served in the tsarist police – with regard to restricting their rights. With respect to me, I personally think that for me an exception can be made . . .[48]

Hannah Arendt offered the following observation on the implications of this line of argument in a more dangerous context. She called a plea for special cases an act of involuntary complicity:

> . . . everyone who demanded to have an 'exception' made in his case implicitly recognized the rule . . . [The] Jewish and Gentile pleaders of 'special cases' were unaware of their involuntary complicity, this implicit recognition of the rule, which spelled death for all non-special cases . . .[49]

As virtually powerless individuals before Soviet authorities who were deciding their fate, the disenfranchised faced obvious constraints on their ability to choose a form of address or public identity. Yet to view their defense testimonies as largely predetermined would be to ignore the fact that these narratives reveal stylistic and substantive choices and a significant degree of variation.[50] The disenfranchised could have chosen a different form or style of appeal from those presented here and, indeed, most of them did.[51] Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that denunciation improved the petitioner's chances of reinstatement, for most of those who were reinstated in rights followed the official guidelines for petitioning and did not include accusations against others in their appeals. Nonetheless, some of the disenfranchised made a voluntary and strategically superfluous effort to denounce others in order to establish for themselves the identity of someone manipulated and exploited.

What greater evidence could there be for the reach and efficacy of this repressive mechanism than that even the victims derived some benefit from its continuation? Those who chose to implicate others in wrongdoing, however, implicated themselves in fact as persons who helped to sustain or lend legitimacy to a policy which deprived millions of their rights. So long as they were treated as distinct from those deserving of disenfranchisement, then they could feel secure in the presence of a repressive policy. The fact that the disenfranchised engaged the regime by making an appeal meant that they had a significant investment in the terms of the debate. Ironically, Soviet outcasts who were petitioning for rights had the greatest stake in the legitimacy of that policy which condemned them. A system of repression can be self-generating in most unexpected ways, particularly when one person's desperate attempt to escape punishment requires the continuation of punishment for others.

Notes

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1 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, hereafter GARF f. 1235, op. 141, d. 145, l. 20.

2 A few recent works have noted the ways in which individuals sustained certain features of the Stalinist system through their language and behavior. See, for example, Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995) and Jochen Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: the Diary of Stephan Podlubnyi (1931–1939)', *Jahrbucher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, v. 44 (1996), pp. 344–73.

3 The disenfranchised often claimed that they were victims of another's false denunciations. Some examples include: Tsentr Khraneniia Strakhovogo Fonda, hereafter TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 14614, l. 50; TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 9705, ll. 16–17 (this man was arrested by the OGPU following an oral denunciation before the rural soviet); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9099, l. 37 (Leningrad *oblast'*, 1933); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 13491, l. 46 (Moscow, 1933); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 4647, ll. 18–19 (Western Siberia *krai*, 1934); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9301,

l. 6 (Ivanovo Industrial *oblast'*, 1935); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 8578, l. 5 (Western Siberia *krai*, 1931). In one case, the Worker–Peasant Inspectorate provided the Central Electoral Commission with a copy of a denunciation which it received and used to justify one man's disenfranchisement. TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 11079, l. 23 (Western Siberia *krai*, 1933).

4 The possible motives for political denunciation are described in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately, 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History', *The Journal of Modern History* (December 1996), pp. 748–67. See also Josh Sanborn, 'Conscription, Correspondence and Politics in Late Imperial Russia' in *Russian History/ Histoire Russe*, special issue on Petitions and Denunciations in Russia from Muscovy to the Stalin Era, Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., v. 24, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Summer 1997), pp. 27–41. I focus here on the motive of self-fashioning, yet the desire to present oneself as a good citizen might have motivated some of the disenfranchised to denounce others. For by writing against an enemy they position themselves as back in the fold, on the side of the state, perhaps even exceptional citizens who experienced first hand the menace of the exploiting class.

5 Martha Minow, 'Surviving Victim Talk', *UCLA Law Review*, v. 40, no. 6 (August 1993). Meir Dan-Cohen also describes how legal responsibility encourages 'the enactment of a reduced and shrivelled self' in 'Responsibility and the Boundaries of the Self', *Harvard Law Review*, v. 105, no. 5 (March 1992), p. 962.

6 Sarah Davies argues that under Stalin '... popular self-identification often had a rather negative quality, in that it appeared to rely on identification *against* more than identification *with*. The role played by the "other," the "enemy" ... assumed a disproportionate weight.' See her *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 125.

7 Minow, 'Surviving Victim Talk', pp. 1413–15. At the same time, the strategy of asserting a victimized self could backfire, and perhaps this is the reason why few *lishentsy* make denunciations in their petitions. A detailed account of the relationship between the petitioner and his nemesis might suggest to the reader that the disenfranchised person could have behaved differently, that the victim really is legally culpable or morally blameworthy. Ibid, p. 1417.

8 The categories of disenfranchised are contained in the RSFSR Constitutions of 1918 and 1925. See *Istoriia sovetskoi konstitutsii, 1917–1956* (Moscow, 1957); *Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporiazhenii rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitel'stva RSFSR* (1925), no. 30, art. 218, p. 393; Potapov and Fedorovskii, *Kto lishaet'sia prava* (Perm, 1928).

9 Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Rights and Passage: Marking Outcasts and Making Citizens in Soviet Russia, 1926–1936' (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996), ch. 1.

10 See respectively TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 7281, l. 17 (Central Volga *krai*, n/a); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 10917, ll. 1–2 (Western Siberia *oblast* , 1932); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 8493, ll. 23–6 (Voronezh *oblast'*, 1932); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 7887, l. 16 (Rostov, 1932).

11 Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'The Problem of Class Identity in NEP Society', in

Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowich and Richard Stites, eds, *Russia in the Era of NEP* (Bloomington, 1991), pp. 26–7; Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul', pp. 346–7.

12 'Kak rabotaet Sekretariat M.I. Kalinina', *Vlast' sovetov*, v. 18 (1935); 'V priemnoi M.I. Kalinina', *Vlast' sovetov*, v. 6 (1934).

13 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 1, d. 129, l. 13.

14 The official guidelines concerning the reinstatement of rights are included in the TsIK SSSR decree, 'Instruktsiia o vyborakh v sovety', *Sobranie zakonov i razporiazhenii SSSR* (1926), no. 66, art. 501. They were revised in later editions (1930, 1934) of this decree. See also I. Kutuzov, *Organizatsiia ucheta, rassmotreniia zhalob i khodataist lits, lishennykh izbiratel'nykh prav* (Moscow: 1935).

15 Jerry Frug, 'Argument as Character', *Stanford Law Review*, v. 40 (April 1988). The author quotes from Aristotle when he writes that 'in making [legal] arguments the speaker or writer "show[s] himself to be of a certain character" ', p. 872. Others also describe how stigmatized people try to distance themselves from the pattern of behavior which is ascribed to them through a 'conscious performance *against* type'. See Kenneth L. Karst, 'Myths of Identity: Individual and Group Portraits of Race and Sexual Orientation', *UCLA Law Review*, v. 43, no. 2 (December 1995), p. 288. Lewis Siegelbaum also notes in his study of worker testimonies in the comrades' courts of the 1920s that 'although many kinds of narrative are either implicitly or explicitly reactive to counter-narratives (i.e. stories that put subjects in a less than favorable light), court appeals are particularly so constrained.' See his 'Narratives of Appeal and the Appeal of Narratives: Labor Discipline and its Contestation in the Early Soviet Period', in Fitzpatrick, ed., *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, p. 67.

16 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 1414, l. 12 (Moscow, 1929).

17 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 16538, l. 7 (Central Volga *krai*, 1931); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 7814, l. 8 (Leningrad, 1930); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 12757, l. 6 (North Caucasus *krai*, 1932); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 16, d. 1268, ll. 2–5 (Southern Kazakhstan *oblast'*, 1936); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 5867, ll. 7–8 (Sverdlovsk *oblast'*, 1934).

18 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 3, d. 1223, l. 12 (Briansk *gubernia*, 1927).

19 GARF f. 1235, op. 140, d. 1220, l. 8 (Siberia *krai*, 1929).

20 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 1414, l. 12 (Moscow, 1929).

21 Interview with a former *lishenka*, September 1994. This view that power was in the hands of a 'self-seeking alien group' was commonly expressed by workers and peasants. See also Davies, *Popular opinion in Stalin's Russia*, p. 129.

22 GARF f. 1235, op. 74, d. 423, l. 182 (n/a, 1930).

23 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 11, d. 414, ll. 12–14 (Moscow *oblast'*, 1931).

24 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9301, l. 6 (Ivanovo Industrial *oblast'*, 1935).

25 Trading licenses were ranked one to five with three being 'retail trade, by the owner of the business and no more than four hired workers or family members, conducted from a modest permanent shop designed for the customer to enter'. See Alan Ball, 'Private Trade and Traders During NEP', in Fitzpatrick et al., eds, *Russia in the Era of NEP*, p. 93.

26 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 10966, l. 12 (Western *oblast'*, 1931). For other examples of petitioners' resentment against those who deserved to be

disenfranchised and yet had been reinstated in rights, see TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9099, l. 37 (Leningrad *oblast'*, 1933); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 13951, l. 26 (Crimea ASSR, 1931); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9301, l. 6 (Ivanovo Industrial *oblast'*, 1935); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 11, d. 414, ll. 12–14 (Moscow *oblast'*, 1931); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 12, d. 7252, ll. 20–2 (Mordovia AO, n/a).

27 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 10566, ll. 10–11 (Nizhegoroskii *krai*, 1928).

28 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 7782, l. 21 (Western *oblast'*, 1930). Others too named those who hired and thereby exploited them, for example, TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 5853, ll. 11–12 (Kirovskii *krai*, 1935); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 426, ll. 9–11 (Kievskii *oblast'*, 1936).

29 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 5451, ll. 10–11 (Leningrad *oblast'*, n/a).

30 The process of petitioning for rights may have amplified social conflict not only by providing another context for naming enemies, but also by providing another occasion or outlet for making claims and airing grievances against others more generally. Also, the fact that only a fraction of complaints were addressed in any way must have left many with lingering dissatisfaction and cause for further grievance. As some authors have noted, 'there is a continuity to disputing that may not be terminated even by formal decision. The end of one dispute may create a new grievance, as surely as a decision labels one party a loser or a liar...' William L. F. Felstiner, Richard L. Abel and Austin Sarat, 'The Emergence and Transformation of Disputes: Naming, Blaming, Claiming', *Law and Society Review*, v. 15, nos. 3–4 (1980–1), p. 639.

31 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 4161, ll. 7–9 (Sverdlovsk, 1932); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 12757, l. 28 (North Caucasus *krai*, 1928); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 399, ll. 39–40 (Western Siberia *krai*, 1931).

32 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 7814, l. 8 (Leningrad, 1930).

33 This kind of deception was frequently reported. For example, a member of the Party and native Tatar wrote a memo to the Central Electoral Commission of the Tatar TsIK in which he reported this problem in 1927: 'A rich peasant of the village gives [a farm laborer] money and says, "The money comes from me, and you take the rank two license out in your name and trade meat; all profits received we split down the middle." The farm laborer is forced to accept these terms ... and in this way ... he is disenfranchised while the rich peasant who anticipated all this and was afraid of being disenfranchised did not take the license out in his name.' GARF f. 1235, op. 104, d. 262, l. 2. For more examples, see TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 7281, l. 17 (Middle Volga *krai*, n/a); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 3039, l. 5 (Leningrad *oblast'*, 1934); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 12, d. 3634, ll. 3–4 (Middle Volga *krai*, 1930).

34 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 5943, ll. 4–5 (Udmurtsk AO, 1932).

35 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 3240, ll. 21–2 (Leningrad *oblast'*, 1935).

36 See Gabor Rittersporn, 'The Omnipresent Conspiracy: on Soviet Imagery of Politics and Social Relations in the 1930s', in Nick Lampert and Gabor Rittersporn, eds, *Stalinism: Its Nature and Aftermath. Essays in Honor of Moshe Lewin* (London, 1992), pp. 101–20.

37 For a discussion of how the Bolshevik leadership came to view the exploiting classes as an enemy defined by its ability to go undetected and unpunished, see Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Bolsheviks Focus on the Heart:

When Insincerity Marked the Enemy', a paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) 29th National Convention (Seattle, Washington, 20 November 1997).

38 Jerry Frug notes that an argument is persuasive to the extent that it appeals to the audience's view of themselves and the way in which they experience the world. See Jerry Frug, 'Argument as Character', *Stanford Law Review*, v. 40 (April 1988), pp. 869–82. This point is also discussed in Angela P. Harris, 'The Jurisprudence of Victimhood', *The Supreme Court Review* (1991), p. 95; Martha Minow, 'Identities', *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*, v. 3, no. 1 (Winter 1991), p. 106; and Stephen L. Carter, 'When Victims Happen to be Black', *The Yale Law Journal*, v. 97, no. 3 (February 1988), p. 422. Carter uses a familiar American case to illustrate the point: 'A public fearful of criminal assault recognizes the pattern of victimization presented in the Goetz case, and his story becomes true because of the way it mirrors the deepest anxieties of a part of that public.'

39 On denunciations in the 1930s, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s', in *The Journal of Modern History* (December 1996), pp. 831–66. While the kinds of accusations which appear in petitions for the reinstatement of rights were similar to those present in denunciations which citizens sent to the secret police in the 1930s, there are also sharp differences among them. Petitioners largely sent their letters to state officials and not to the secret police, and their primary purpose in writing was not to punish another but to be reinstated in rights.

40 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 14614, ll. 9, 12, 44 (Moscow, 1929–31).

41 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 13, d. 9705, l. 13 (Rostov, 1934); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 7, d. 7814, ll. 15, 17 (Leningrad, 1929–30); TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 1983, l. 61 (Mordovia AO, 1931–3).

42 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 9, d. 14150, l. 5 (Western Siberia *krai*, 1931).

43 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 1389, ll. 26–7 (Mari AO, 1932).

44 Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class: the Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia', *Journal of Modern History*, v. 65 (1993), pp. 745–70; Kenneth L. Karst, 'Myths of Identity', p. 286.

45 Martha Minow, 'Surviving Victim Talk', pp. 1420–6; Martha Minow, 'Speaking of Silence', *University of Miami Law Review*, v. 43, no. 1 (September 1988), pp. 494–502.

46 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 10, d. 1983, ll. 49–50 (Mordovia AO, 1933).

47 TsKhSF f. 5248, op. 14, d. 426, ll. 9–11 (Kievskii *oblast'*, 1936).

48 GARF f. 5404, op. 2, d. 5, l. 17 (Voronezh, 1925).

49 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil* (London, 1963), pp. 132–3.

50 On the various narrative strategies of appeal which are reflected in the petitions of the disenfranchised, see Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Rights and Passage'; Golfo Alexopoulos, 'The Ritual Lament: a Narrative of Appeal in the 1920s and 1930s', in Fitzpatrick, ed., *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, pp. 117–29.

51 Out of a sample of 500 petitions for the reinstatement of rights which were overwhelmingly approved, only about 10 per cent included an accusation of another's wrongdoing.

11

Self-Realization in the Stalinist System: Two Soviet Diaries of the 1930s

Jochen Hellbeck

Recently Soviet historians have begun to move into the scarcely explored field of everyday life in Bolshevik Russia and investigate the intricate web of relationships and negotiations between different groups of the population and representatives of the official order. This tendency is commendable in that it rejects a deep-seated notion of the Soviet population as a mere victim of the regime's aspirations, which dates back to the totalitarian theory. Yet the very terms used to analyze ranges of individual or social group behavior, such as conformism, dissidence, or resistance, raise a new problem. Implicit in these terms is the assumption of a pure individual self, or social essence, which to varying degrees preserves its integrity while interacting with the Bolshevik system.[1]

It may be worthwhile here to take a brief look at the historiography of Nazi Germany, where studies of *Alltagsgeschichte* have proliferated since the early 1980s.[2] As an astute observer recently noted, for all their nuanced treatment of the range and options of individual behavior, these studies abound in notions which accent the foreign nature of National Socialism. The ruling ideology invariably appears as an exogenous force, to which individuals accommodated or subordinated themselves in different ways. 'Where did all the Nazis go?' this observer asked in consternation.[3]

Against the tendency inherent in the very method of *Alltagsgeschichte* to de-ideologize the sphere of the everyday and disconnect it from the workings of the political system, the present essay points to a much more fundamental involvement and implication of individuals in their political environment. My study is an inquiry into Stalinist subjectivity. I use the term *subjectivity* in two ways: in a more immediate sense, it refers to the sphere of subjective perceptions and experience. My assumption here is that for us to gain an understanding of a distinct sociopolitical order, we have to examine in the first place the language that inhabitants of this order used at the time to express themselves. More fundamentally, however, by subjectivity I have in mind a process of *subjectivization* through which individuals creatively read themselves into a system of power, thereby turning themselves into self-regulating agents. In this connection, I am concerned in particular with a range of self-practices, such as introspection and record-keeping, as catalysts of individual subjectivity.[4]

By investigating processes of subjectivization in the Stalinist system, this essay seeks to demonstrate how Bolshevik ethics shaped the ways in which members of Soviet society understood themselves. By the same token, it elucidates the relationship between individuals' self-practices and political practices employed by the Soviet regime. Overall the purpose is to turn away from a prevailing historiographical view of Soviet state power as a merely coercive political system. Rather than concentrating on the mechanisms through which the Soviet state repressed or prevented free self-expression, I investigate the particular modes of self-relationships that it brought into being.[5] One of the fundamental aims of the Soviet regime, I argue, was to transform the population under its governance into active and politically conscious citizens who would partake in the program of building socialism on the strength of their own understanding and personal convictions. Investigating notions of the self entertained by members of Soviet society thus sheds light on a crucial, hitherto largely neglected, sphere of Bolshevik governance.

The focus of my study is on narratives of the self recorded in personal diaries of the Stalin era. Following the collapse of the Soviet system, and also in connection with the recent opening of hitherto closed archival funds, diaries from the 1930s have now become accessible on a large scale to Soviet historians.[6] At first glance, the diary, inasmuch as it denotes the sphere of the intimate, appears to be flatly anachronistic in the Stalinist system. With the imposition of Stalin's dictatorship, conventional wisdom has it, diarists became fewer, and their journals thinner, as individuals had to fear that their private records might be seized by the state security organs and turned against them. Although such fear and the concomitant issues of self-censorship and falsification should by no means be dismissed, I want to draw attention to an opposite dynamic: having scrutinized a large number of Russian archives, my sense is that the Revolution of 1917 entailed a veritable explosion of autobiographical writing in Russia. The habit of diary keeping, hitherto limited to a small layer of educated society, extended to larger and larger segments of the population. As I will argue, this massive quest for self-expression is of no less relevance for our understanding of the Soviet self than is the fear of self-exposure, so familiar to historians of Stalinism. What is more, both of these dynamics need to be studied in the ways in which they interact.

The first of two diaries to be investigated in this essay is the journal of Stepan Podlubnyi. In my mind, this diary stands out as one of the most extraordinary personal records of the Stalin era in terms of its scope, volume, and candor.[7] Podlubnyi was an offspring of a Ukrainian peasant family. He came to Moscow in 1931, at the age of 17, seeking, through the educational, professional, and political channels available to him, to make his way upward in the system, but also, and by the same token, to become a good Soviet citizen. Indeed for him there existed no distinction between his personal success and the prospect of becoming a New Soviet Man, between his notion of self-interest and the idealistic campaign for self-renewal launched by the Stalinist regime. This suggests the shallowness of the emphasis that historians have put on the self-interest as a conceptual tool, without taking into account the specific historical context in which such an interest could be articulated.[8] The greatest problem that Podlubnyi faced in his new life was the fact that he came from a dekulakized family. These social origins made him, by definition, an unacceptable recruit to the Soviet system and especially unsuited to advance in it. Consequently, he sought to falsify his social origins to his Moscow environment. Podlubnyi attended a factory apprenticeship school and also became a Komsomol activist; in 1935 he was accepted into the Moscow Medical Institute.

In my analysis of this diary, I seek to make visible the efforts Podlubnyi undertook by means of his journal to inscribe himself into the Bolshevik system of meaning. In this connection, I propose to study the diary as a tool for self-creation and self-fashioning. In a subsequent step, my essay takes up the relationship between self and world in the Stalinist context. I will investigate the sources of meaning that Podlubnyi discovered in his personal existence, and demonstrate how the notion of a purposeful life affected his sense of self and his relationship toward the political system of Stalinism.

Podlubnyi's diary, which he began to write following his arrival in Moscow, offers striking insights into its author's view of himself. Even within the intimate sphere defined by his journal, his 'only friend', as he put it, Podlubnyi did not question the legitimacy of the Stalinist dekulakization campaign. In keeping with this, he also accepted the stigma of class enemy that had been placed on him. Thus, even outside the parameters of official ideology, Podlubnyi conformed to the Soviet system of social identification. What is more, it fully shaped his sense of self and the world:

> A thought that I can never seem to shake off, that sucks my blood from me like sap from a birch tree – is the question of my psychology. Can it really be that I will be different from the others? This question makes my hair stand on end, and I break out in shivers. Right now, I am a person in the middle, not belonging to one side nor to the other, but who could easily slide to either. But the chances are already greater for the positive side to take over – but still with a touch of the negative left. How devilishly this touch torments me. (entry of 13 September 1932)

What Podlubnyi meant by his 'psychology' was the state of his consciousness. As this description suggests, he regarded his consciousness as being shaped by conflicting influences. On the one pole, there was the 'negative side', the lasting effect of his social origins as a kulak offspring. From this 'old wound of my origins and memories', as he wrote in another entry (25 September 1934), flowed everything that was bad, reactionary, backward inside him. Podlubnyi clearly understood this negative side of his self as the class enemy who threatened to take possession of him. On the other pole, however, there was also a 'positive' side – the promise of a proletarian identity, to which Podlubnyi aspired. During the early 1930s, Podlubnyi identified this ideal with the notion of a 'progressive' industrial shockworker; later on, the model worker metamorphosed into a 'cultured' and 'educated' *intelligent*. In short, Podlubnyi was referring to the New Soviet Man in his evolving manifestations.

Podlubnyi described himself as standing in the 'middle', between his discredited past and his anticipated future identity. His new life in Moscow thus constituted a journey from the old to the new, a journey of self-renewal and salvation. It should be stressed that Bolshevism in principle did not bar class enemies from full integration into the socialist society of the future. However, they could be saved only if they reconstructed themselves and, through labor, demonstrated their sincere devotion to the Soviet state. This was the hope to which Podlubnyi clung after arriving in Moscow: that he would be recognized as a proletarian if he succeeded in reworking himself – in shedding his kulak psyche and acquiring proletarian consciousness.

If we read Podlubnyi's diary in light of his own self-understanding and interpret it as an account of his journey from the old to the new, even entries which, on the face of it, seem to be detached sociological observations, ostensibly recorded for the benefit of future historians, acquire an entirely different meaning. For instance, Podlubnyi's diary contains vivid portrayals of the everyday life of young peasant in-migrants to Moscow. Podlubnyi frequently socialized with them. The following is a description of an evening he spent in the neighborhood:

> Let's just take today's evening. One of many. A dance, a 'virtuoso' dance accompanied by the accordion. The guys with drunken mugs and even sober fellows with insolent mugs pawing the girls, shoving, and being rowdy. Vas'ka Godunov, a lad who has lived in Moscow since 1928. He is only 20, in the prime of his life. He is dead drunk, on clumsy, drunk legs he taps the Russian dance. He has forgotten that it's time to go to work, that his comrades there are waiting for him . . . [. . .] He has emptied a whole bottle, he couldn't care less. But tomorrow? Tomorrow he'll get up with a heavy, aching head – without work, without his bite of bread, torn and sick. And then? Well, they won't give him work, where can he go? Perhaps do some trading on the market. A number of these fellows will come together, and they'll begin to steal. If it works, fine, but if not, they'll literally die of hunger. [. . .] There you see a thief, a bandit and what have you, someone whom it is very difficult, if not impossible, to put on his feet, and lead to the path of truth, the path of a cultured person. (2 December 1933)

Rather than viewing this text as a reflection of a social reality, I propose to treat it as a problematica. We should ask ourselves what motivated Podlubnyi to write so extensively about these young villagers. The answer, in my view, is that the evening in the Rodins' kitchen, in the way Podlubnyi narrated it, provided him with a marker on his journey of self-renewal. Through the description of the evening, Podlubnyi substantiated the struggle between the old and the new which he saw himself engaged in. The portrayal of the drunk young peasants supplied him with a contrast against which he could establish his own sense of self as an urban, cultured new man.

The process of self-fashioning that Podlubnyi enacted in his diary is strikingly illustrated in the portrayal of his father. Judging from the diary, the relationship between father and son was very conflictual. During his childhood, Stepan was frequently beaten by his father, Filipp Evdokimovich. The father also forced him to tend the family's goats, thereby keeping him from attending school regularly. As Podlubnyi wrote in his diary, he experienced a moment of liberation when he was separated from his abusive father, who was sentenced to administrative exile during the dekulakization campaign. This was a turning point in his life: only with the removal of the tyrant did he start to gain consciousness and 'grow' (13 August 1932). Filipp Evdokimovich reunited with the family in Moscow upon completion of his three-year term of exile in 1933. Stepan expressed his revulsion at how 'old', 'backward', and 'useless' his father remained, despite the latter's opportunity to remake himself in exile. By the same token this characterization of his father in the pejorative terms of the Soviet language served to underscore the positive Soviet identity of the son:

> *9.7.1933* [. . .] Now about F.E. himself. A halfway old man, of no use to anybody and completely superfluous. He has left the old behind in many ways, but not altogether. But in the material sense definitely. Yet he hasn't been able to join the new. And if he doesn't succeed, it will be bitter for him and for us. This old man's weak will can destroy him as well as us. We have to help him with many things. We must force him to work on himself. Well, this will become clearer in the process. I look at him as at an acquaintance. Coldly. I can see in him only qualities negative for me. [. . .] His character is one of a wretched old man. Actually he's not really an old man.

Stepan portrayed his father as a 'useless old man', not because of his biological age (he was 45 years old then), but because he showed no effort to become a New, socially useful Soviet citizen. Throughout the diary, Podlubnyi emphasized his emotional and intellectual detachment from his father. Calling him a 'father by conception but a stranger by education' (24 January 1934) or simply his 'former father' (9 May 1934), he made a point of contrasting relationships based on blood with those forged by consciousness. Bonds of consciousness superseded those of kinship and thus justified Podlubnyi's claim to be recognized as a member of the new order, in spite of his blood ties to the old.

One way to view this relationship and how it informed Podlubnyi's social and political identity would be to explain it in psychological terms: as a struggle for identity fought against an oppressive father. This approach, however, is problematic because it accepts the concepts and emphases selected by Podlubnyi as psychological truth. Instead, these concepts can be situated historically as parts of a larger cultural text. The epithets used by Podlubnyi to establish the opposition between himself and his father strikingly resemble the epithets with which the battle for Soviet industrialization was fought: a struggle between 'old' and 'new' elements in society, 'backward' and 'progressive', darkness and light. But the similarity between Podlubnyi's rebellion against his father and the war gripping the country at large was not confined to the way in which they were phrased; it extended to content as well. The Party appealed to youth, and especially to those with tainted backgrounds, to dissociate themselves from their fathers and denounce them. Ritualistic declarations made by sons and daughters of anti-Soviet class origins filled the local and national press, repudiating their parents and stating that they had severed all ties to them. Among these sons was the famous Pavlik Morozov, who allegedly denounced his kulak father to the authorities and was then slain by his uncle. Pavlik was declared a martyr and a model to be emulated by Soviet youth.[9]

If Podlubnyi's relation toward his kulak father replicated a cultural pattern, we may conclude that he articulated this conflict because he felt encouraged by his environment to do so. He knew this articulation to be legitimate and, moreover, meaningful. The fundamental reason why Podlubnyi's rebellion against his father occupied such a prominent place in his diary was that he could situate it on the cultural axis – the struggle between old and new – which ultimately provided meaning in his life at the time. The renewal of man and society, to be completed with the construction of socialism, formed the core of Bolshevik ideology during the early 1930s.

Podlubnyi conceptualized himself and his social environment in such a way that it would conform to and illustrate the path of personal salvation on which he was embarked. Among other things, the narrative of salvation required the presence of a representative of the old order, from which Podlubnyi had sprung, in order to make apparent his process of personal emancipation and legitimize his claim for full membership in Stalinist society. The darker and the more backward Podlubnyi portrayed his father, the more the arduousness and length of his own journey of self-renewal stood out and the closer he appeared to be to the final destination of personal salvation.

From its very inception, Podlubnyi's diary functioned as part of a self-project – as an active tool in the process of its author's self-creation. On the most elementary level, the diary helped Podlubnyi master the Russian language, which – given his Ukrainian background – had been taught to him only as a foreign language. The diary's early entries were phrased in awkward Russian and contained numerous orthographic errors. They were devoted exclusively to events in the workplace and the Komsomol, complete with painstakingly drawn sketches of the printing equipment in the *Pravda* plant. On a deeper level, however, the diary served Podlubnyi in learning yet another language: the Soviet language, a language revolving around labor activism, discipline, social use, and devotion to the state order. By means of his diary, Podlubnyi monitored his thoughts and behavior, measured his achievements and criticized his failures. His journal was in this sense a laboratory of his evolving Soviet identity.

Eventually the diary served as a training ground for an autobiographical novel that Podlubnyi hoped to write and be able to publish one day – a novel devoted to 'the life of an outdated class, its spiritual rebirth and adaptation to new conditions' (25 September 1934). Podlubnyi not only hoped to remake himself through writing, but his projected novel – and, by extension, also the diary – were to serve as evidence of the process of learning and reconstruction that he had undergone. By means of his literary work he would be able to substantiate his claim for full citizenship in Soviet society. Podlubnyi's diary shows how by means of a personal, indeed, intimate record, an individual wrote himself into the political order of Stalinism.

This fusion of personal and social identity, the individual and the state order, which we observe in Podlubnyi's diary, entails a powerful challenge of the conceptual paradigm of a public versus a private sphere so frequently deployed in studies dealing with the Stalin era. This paradigm carries an especially problematic assumption of a subjective truth, identified with the private, as opposed to an official system of propaganda and lies, aligned with the public. To be sure, Podlubnyi did develop a distinct notion of personal thoughts that were dangerous to voice in public and could be confided only to his diary. But by the same token, Podlubnyi conceived of these thoughts as being illegitimate. This attitude was rooted in Marxist ideology, which denounced the private sphere as a constituent element of the capitalist system. In the Marxist view, the function of the private world was to deceive the oppressed worker, to give him respite and make him oblivious to his fundamental state of alienation. Under socialism, any notion of the private therefore had to be anachronistic. Freed from capitalist oppression, man regained his nature as a social being. His inner being and outer function became one. Consequently, in the early Soviet system, an individual's attempt to retain or carve out a private sphere for itself, shielded from the gaze of the collective, was considered to be a petty-bourgeois and selfish, or even downright counterrevolutionary act.[10] Faithful to the Marxist concept of man, Podlubnyi could not conceive of his diary as a record of a private sphere to be remembered. Rather it served as a site of purification. Podlubnyi envisioned writing as a struggle from which he would ultimately emerge cleansed, fully identical with public values and thereby rid of any alternative personal, selfish thoughts.

Rather than applying the binary terms of private and public, I suggest the understanding of Podlubnyi's diary as a technology of the self. The term *self* in this connection designates a specific relationship of interiority which Podlubnyi established with respect to himself. As Podlubnyi himself put it quite bluntly, he regarded his diary as a 'rubbish heap' onto which he could discard all the 'garbage and dirt' accumulating in his mind (23 January 1933). What he meant by 'dirt' were states of mind when he felt to be in an 'idiotic, non-political mood' or when he observed deficiencies of the political order which, as he explicitly wrote, he was 'not supposed to see'. Podlubnyi of course hoped that, by emptying this dirt into his diary, he would eventually be able to free himself from it and emerge a purer person, rid of his personal doubts (25 September 1934). But underneath lurked the assumption that by merely exposing his impure soul he was already attaining a purer consciousness and thus working toward his personal salvation. Indeed, the work of purification to which he committed himself made sense only in an environment of impurity. Thus Podlubnyi kept producing new sites of impurity to be exposed and new instances of contamination to be neutralized. To this extent, we might understand his diary as a technology of transparison, of making transparent.

This technology of transparison, which we might also call a hermeneutics of the soul – that is, an ongoing process of probing the self in order to understand and reveal its nature – was a central political practice of the Bolshevik state.[11] The Bolsheviks were not solely concerned with the subject's outward attitude; they sought to appropiate its soul. Their goal was to persuade the population that the revolutionary process was a manifestation of historical necessity. Man was to become engaged in the program of building socialism out of his own will; he should comply with revolutionary politics out of understanding and personal conviction. This urge to engage the human soul also explains the Bolsheviks' obsession with transparency in public life, as evidenced in the frequent practice of purges and show trials. The goal of a show trial was to bare the soul of the defendant, in order to reveal his state of consciousness and 'true' stance toward socialism. Yet what is astonishing with respect to Podlubnyi, is that he applied the technology of transparison to himself. On his own initiative, and outside the parameters of official Bolshevik discourse, he kept purging his soul, exposing, and holding trial over the potential class enemy within himself.

If viewed in relation to the Bolshevik project of radically remolding the population within the shortest possible timespan – which some scholars have defined as the chief defining feature of totalitarianism[12] – Podlubnyi's diary reveals an important additional dimension of totalitarian rule, which has hitherto remained invisible. It shows how an individual actively embraced the task of radical self-transformation, converting it into a relationship of interiority. Podlubnyi's perceived obligation to incessantly work on himself was such that his only enduring identity (in the face of his fleeting class or ethnic identities) can be said to be his identity as a project – an unfinished piece of work on himself.[13]

The relationship of interiority, however, is just one of two aspects characterizing Soviet subjectivity; it is paralleled by a simultaneous quest for outwardness or self-expression – the subject's attempt to join, and eventually become absorbed by, the historical process. It is this quest for self-expression that I am turning to now. An investigation of Podlubnyi's diary strikingly reveals to what extent the author embedded his own self-project into the Soviet revolutionary project as a whole. This wider frame of self-actualization, bracketing the individual's personal development and the development of the polity, is brought into sharp relief in Podlubnyi's habit of establishing in his diary yearly summaries on his achievements and failures. These 'balance sheets', as he called them, allowed him to stand back and observe critically the character and pace of his personal growth. One of the balance sheets begins as follows:

> *30.12.1933* Everywhere in the Union and in all countries the balance of the yearly work is being drawn. Everywhere in the Union, in many cities, and also in Moscow, conferences, congresses, etc. are convoked in order to review the work of the year. [. . .]

Two things are striking in this respect: first, the reason why Podlubnyi felt motivated to review his personal development – which he knew to be widely practiced throughout the country – was that this practice was expected of him. Second, and even more striking, in reviewing his own development, Podlubnyi used terms which were almost completely identical with the terminology used in official Soviet balance-sheets. A juxtaposition of Podlubnyi's end-of-year diary entry and an editorial of *Pravda* summarizing the achievements of that year shows that both texts focus on the same notion of growth.[14] Both speak of the 'stormy growth', of the Soviet population and Podlubnyi respectively, emphasizing in particular the 'cultural growth' of population. The only discrepancy was that where *Pravda* affirmed that a 'leap in consciousness' had taken place among the Soviet population, Podlubnyi complained that his consciousness was still underdeveloped.

As this example demonstrates, Podlubnyi measured himself as a subject within the larger framework of the Soviet polity: his self-development hinged on the state of development of the political order in which he lived. Underlying this dependence was of course the Marxist conviction that the development of self and world was ultimately conditioned by the steady progression of History toward completion, when mankind and the world would reach the stage of total purity.

In this connection another diary should be mentioned, which illustrates my observation about the fusion of individual and state order more glaringly than Podlubnyi's. This is the diary of the playwright Aleksandr Afinogenov.[15] This record provides fascinating insights into the relationship between self and world and the meaning an individual could find in his existence during the Stalin era. Afinogenov, who was one of the most frequently staged Soviet playwrights during the 1930s, was expelled from the Communist Party in 1937. For close to a year, in the face of a vicious press campaign launched against him, he waited to be arrested, but instead he was reinstated into the Party in early 1938.

Afinogenov had kept a diary since 1926. This was a typical writer's diary, containing drafts and aphorisms, but largely void of personal thoughts. Yet, confonted with the likelihood of his arrest, Afinogenov's diary turned into an intensely personal record. Initially he could explain his denunciation only in two possible ways: either an administrative error had occurred, or else he was the victim of nefarious plotting on the part of fascist enemies hiding among the leadership of the Soviet theater world. As he knew himself to be clean, Afinogenov expected to be reinstated into the Party soon. Increasingly, however, Afinogenov wondered whether his punishment hadn't been rightly inflicted on him: hadn't he neglected to continue working on himself, as soon as he had achieved celebrity status as a playwright? Hadn't he turned lazy and parasitic, just like those high office-holders, who were now purged in droves from their positions? Again we can appreciate the diary as a technology of the self: Afinogenov vowed to engage in the pursuit of personal asceticism, better himself, in order to be 'reborn' as a purer human being, worthy to be saved and reinstated into the Party.

Reflecting on his personal fate in the context of the purges, Afinogenov used a highly revealing metaphor. His diary entry of that day began with the perennial question: Why me? Why am I, who hasn't committed any crime, being purged? Yet in the next sentence, Afinogenov scolded himself for being so weak-spirited as to voice such selfish thoughts:

> You again think that everything has to do with yourself. You still can't grasp the thought that you'll understand everything only once the purpose of all that's going on right now has become clear to you. That purpose is the general purge of our Soviet house from all impurity.

If he were an inanimate cup that had been thrown away accidentally, Afinogenov reasoned, he would have to deplore his fate. But,

> you are a human being. You have to understand with all of your heart, that even if you will be broken, there is no reason to cry; you have to be happy that the time of such a purge has come and that you have been swept away not because of somebody's evil intentions but by pure chance. And would this be a reason for you to request a stop of the removal of the garbage? Of course not.... Once the caring master [*khoziain*], while sweeping out the garbage, finds behind the window the inkwell that had accidentally been thrown out, he will give orders to wash it and put it back on the table. The inkwell – that is you! And you will stand on the master's table for a long time, and who knows, perhaps he will even use you to write some new remarkable thoughts? In any event, is the purpose of what's currently going on now clear to you? Yes. Do you want to be a participant in this purpose or an inanimate object? A participant, of course! (9 September 1937)

This entry touches on a central tenet of Soviet subjectivity. Afinogenov refused to be identified with a broken cup discarded in the purge process because he was a Communist endowed with consciousness and therefore had the capacity to understand the historical mechanisms motivating the purge. It was this consciousness that underpinned Afinogenov's subjectivity as a member of the Soviet system. Yet by the same token, Afinogenov's view of himself as being conditioned by the unfailing laws of historical development ultimately relegated him back from the position of subject to object of history. Just like the inkwell on the master's table, Afinogenov's task was to give himself over to History, to turn into a tool by means of which History – embodied by Joseph Stalin – wrote itself.

The apparent paradox of subjectivization and objectification illustrated in Afinogenov's diary entry is inherent in the totalitarian promise of positive freedom proclaimed by the Bolshevik regime. Marxism foresaw the liberation of the individual as well as of mankind in the course of History's unfolding and eventual consummation. The notion of freedom contained in this vision is the freedom of the universalized individual living in full harmony with the world.

Yet once the ideal of positive freedom is actualized, once man embarks on his own subjectivization, he appears to objectify himself at the same time. Scholars of totalitarianism have of course recognized this phenomenon for a long time. Specifically, they have pointed to the self-destructive effects of Bolshevik party politics, which decreed the total submission of the individual Party member to the unfailing laws of History as interpreted by the Party leadership. But what an analysis of personal diaries reveals is the extent to which individuals actively sought to objectify themselves in their quest for self-actualization and, ultimately, salvation. The individual's joining of the totalitarian movement can thus not only be explained as an act of self-submission and self-loss;[16] it was – paradoxically – also the highest form of self-realization. This also explains why Afinogenov (and other Soviet diarists as well) accepted even the thought of being crushed by the Party and thrown into the dustbin of History, as this apparent act of self-destruction contributed to History's eventual consummation and thereby satisfied the central purpose to which the subject had devoted its life.[17]

With their emphasis on self-renewal through redemption, Afinogenov's and Podlubnyi's diaries are strongly suggestive of Romantic subjectivity, and especially the notion of *Bildungsgeschichte*. Divorced from nature, the Romantic subject embarks on a laborious journey of self-education and progressive self-formation in order to regain its lost unity. The culmination of the Romantic subject's existence, according to Charles Taylor, is reached when man 'recognizes his own life as an adequate, true expression of what he potentially is'.[18] The Stalinist concept of man shares with Romanticism not only an understanding of life as the subject's painful struggle for self-realization and salvation; Stalinist subjectivity consists in self-expression as well. Self-realization is brought about through the subject's expression of its essence, and, specifically, through its alignment with the unfailing course of History, as it was interpreted by the Bolshevik leadership.

The degree to which Stalinist culture was rooted in Romanticism has been scarcely acknowledged by researchers.[19] Recently, several scholars have suggested understanding the Bolshevik project as an enactment of precepts dating from the Enlightenment.[20] This interpretation indeed provides a powerful explanation of the authoritarian features of the Stalinist state, but as far as the individual subject is concerned, it is reduced to the status of a malleable creature which is coercively molded and perfected by means of outside intervention. However, if we acknowledge the degree to which Stalinist subjectivity was also informed by Romanticism, it appears that it is the subject itself that takes on the task of self-perfection as its own. The implication is that, to an extent, individuals actively embraced Stalinism as a means of self-realization.[21]

Against the background of totalitarian subjectivity as the coming together of self and world on the premise of the subject's full universalization, I propose to understand individual dissent in the Stalinist system as a potential loss of world and self. Podlubnyi's diary powerfully illustrates the crippling effects that a diarist's attempt to question the official belief system had on himself as a person. Unable to accommodate his growing doubts and critical thought into the narrative of salvation that constituted his diary, Podlubnyi once wrote that there were 'two people' inside him. One of them was a 'bureaucrat': 'Daily he reminds me to be on my guard, to observe the rules and be careful... This person is present in me for most of the time.' The other person was one 'who collects all sorts of dirt in my soul, all the remaining garbage, and he waits for the right moment to splash out this refuse over the head of someone else in order to relieve himself from the burden of the dirt. This person lives more rarely in me, but he exists. This old wound of my origins and memories occasionally makes itself felt.' (25 September 1934.) As the last sentence makes clear, Podlubnyi continued to attribute his inability to always think in a Soviet way to his stained kulak background.

As he followed the Kirov murder in December 1934 and the ensuing campaign of heightened vigilance against class enemies launched by the Soviet leadership, Podlubnyi questioned the legitimacy of the regime's repressive policies. In particular, he distrusted the official version of the murder, 'just the way that one distrusts a thief who had stolen before' (26 January 1935). Podlubnyi suspected instead that the government itself had fabricated the murder in order to rid itself of a bothersome member. But along with his criticism, Podlubnyi also leveled serious accusations against himself, chiding himself for his 'too realistic' perspective on things. No longer was he a member of the 'progressive' Soviet youth, he wrote; his 'ideology' had become 'rotten' (entries of 5 and 26 January 1935).

Podlubnyi experienced his condemnation of the state order as an act of self-destruction. All the sources and elements of his self-definition as a subject were grounded in the Soviet regime. Bound as he was to the conceptual language of the regime in defining his identity, Podlubnyi's attempts at detaching himself from the values of the state invariably entailed a rejection of his positive self and forced him to condemn himself as a 'useless', 'pessimistic', and 'reactionary' person. Characteristically, his criticism of the Soviet leadership, which grew substantially in the course of the 1930s, never extended into an indictment of the Soviet project as a whole. Podlubnyi stopped short of such criticism, because it threatened to destroy his positive sense of self and marginalize him in Soviet society. He was aware that by articulating anti-Soviet statements he risked not only being publicly relegated into the camp of the class enemy, but also being forced *within himself* to condemn himself as a bourgeois or, even worse, a hereditary kulak. To the extent that he did assume a critical voice, his criticism reproduced the Bolshevik regime of truth. Podlubnyi could denounce Stalin or even the entire Bolshevik leadership as inhuman and cruel; he also condemned the regime's inability to live up to its promises, but, remarkably, he did not question the overall configuration of the world in which he was living, nor the purposes to which the Soviet state had committed itself.

In the light of the threat of self-loss that we observe in both Podlubnyi's and Afinogenov's diaries, the act of self-censorship acquires new meaning. Traditionally, self-censorship in the Soviet context has been interpreted as a fear of divulging a subjective truth to one's environment, to the extent that it is completely repressed. This analysis has revealed another function of self-censorship, diametrically opposed to the traditional interpretation. I would argue that Soviet diarists censored themselves not only in order to suppress a truth from others but mainly out of fear of destroying the truth that they held of themselves. In this interpretation, then, self-censorship was tantamount to self-expression in the Bolshevik mode. This suggests that the exercise of self-censorship functioned also as a means of self-preservation.

This essay has focused on the Stalinist system as a subjectivizing method of governance. In the imagination of the Bolshevik leadership, the leap toward the Communist ideal of a perfect world populated by free, fully integrated human beings – an ideal to which the Soviet state remained fundamentally committed at least throughout the Stalin era – could succeed only if effected by the collective will of a politically conscious social body. This interest in transforming the population at large, and each individual person in particular, into politically active, conscious citizens explains the virtual obsession of Soviet leaders with probing and baring individuals' 'souls'.

Insofar as they worked as tools of self-knowledge, purification, and perfection, the diaries investigated in this study can be regarded as corollaries of the subjectivizing instruments and practices of the Soviet state. However, it would be misleading to view the Soviet diary solely in terms of a top–bottom narrative. Writing about oneself and converting the self into a work project was a means of self-realization. By creatively writing themselves into the Soviet order, Podlubnyi and Afinogenov fashioned an identity for themselves, a sense of meaning and purpose of their existence. Aligning themselves with the larger Soviet agenda, they turned themselves into active participants in a world-historical, world-transformative drama.

The traditional focus in historiography on the extent to which the promise of collective self-realization rendered individuals into helpless creatures, blindly executing Party directives, has obscured the empowering effects of Soviet subjectivization. By engaging in practices of self-transformation and self-perfection, and by thus appropriating the language and mechanisms underlying the workings of the Soviet order, individuals created for themselves the possibility to actively intervene in the Soviet project and also contest policies. Diaries from the Stalin era thus provide invaluable insights into the allocation and workings of power. Power in the Soviet system worked not simply from top to bottom (as members of the totalitarian school would have it), or from the bottom to the top (as newer studies on resistance suggest), but constituted a field of play which was delimited by a set of values and practices. Through their use these values and practices were constantly in the process of affirmation, challenge, modification, and redefinition.[22] This view of power has marked effects also on how to understand the role of the individual in the Stalin era: the individual emerges as both a catalyst and important component part of the Soviet 'system', if this term subsumes a set of common underlying values and notions of how man should be.

Notes

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1 For explorations into everyday life under Stalinism, see Sheila Fitzpatrick: *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after*

Collectivization (New York, 1994); Robert Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934–1941* (New Haven, 1996); Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, 1997). Studies on everyday resistance, non-conformism, and other 'survival tactics' during the Stalin era can be expected to multiply in the years to come, judging alone from the great number of presentations devoted to these themes at a conference, entitled 'New Approaches to the Study of Stalinism', which took place at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, in May 1996 (papers presented at this conference appear in *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique* v. 39, nos. 1–2 (January–June 1998)).

2 Most noteworthy among them are *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, Martin Broszat and Elke Fröhlich, eds (Munich, 1983), and Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Dissent in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1983). See also *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, Alf Lüdtke, ed. (Princeton, 1995).

3 Peter Fritzsche, 'Where Did All the Nazis Go? Reflections on Resistance and Collaboration', *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, v. 23 (1994), pp. 191–24. Among recent social histories of the Third Reich, Detlev Peukert's study of popular attitudes stands out for its sensitivity to the pervasiveness of Nazi ideology in everyday life (Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven, 1987); see also Alf Lüdtke's excellent discussion of the everyday practice of power, understood in a Foucauldian vein, in Fascist Germany (Alf Lüdtke, 'Die Praxis von Herrschaft: Zur Analyse von Hinnehmen und Mitmachen im deutschen Faschismus', in *Terror, Herrschaft und Alltag im Nationalsozialismus. Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte des deutschen Faschismus*, Brigitte Berlekamp and Werner Röhr, eds (Münster, 1995), pp. 226–45).

4 This understanding of subjectivity is informed by the works of Michel Foucault. Foucault, in my view, is often mistakenly understood to argue for the notion of the subject as largely a construct of external disciplinary agencies and, for the most part, state power. Although this was the emphasis of his earlier works, in his late studies Foucault has called attention to the degree to which modern individuals were instrumental in investing themselves with subjecthood. To this extent individual subjectivity appears not just as a field of domination but, by the same token, as a means of self-empowerment. I am stressing this latter aspect in particular throughout my analysis of Stalinist subjectivity. For Foucault's investigation of the modern self, see: *Technologies of the Self: a Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Luther Martin et al., eds (Amherst, 1988); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (New York, 1990); see also Eva Erdmann, 'Die Literatur und das Schreiben. "L'ecriture de soi" bei Michel Foucault', in *Ethos der Moderne. Michel Foucaults Kritik der Aufklärung*, Eva Erdmann et al., eds (New York, 1990), pp. 260–79.

5 This approach has been inspired by Stephen Kotkin's seminal study of Magnitogorsk during the 1930s (Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995). For a critique of Kotkin's

monograph and, most notably, his understanding of subjectivity, see Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, 'Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's "Magnetic Mountain" and the State of Soviet Historical Studies', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, no. 3 (1996), pp. 456–63.

6 The best available guide to recently published diary literature from twentieth-century Russia is *Otkrytyi arkhiv. Spravochnik opublikovannykh dokumentov po istorii Rossii XX-go veka iz gosudarstvennykh i semeinykh arkhivov (po otechestvennoi periodike 1985–1995 gg.)*, I. A. Kondakova, ed. (Moscow, 1997). This bibliography lists more 200 diaries and diary excerpts, most of which pertain to the pre-war Stalin era. Among the most notable recent publications of diary material, see Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen, eds, *Intimacy and Terror. Soviet Diaries from the 1930s* (New York, 1995). Together with Veronique Garros and Natalia Korenevskaya, I am currently in the process of establishing an archival fund at Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet (RGGU), Moscow, which is to serve as a repository of diaries from the Soviet era.

7 Stepan Podlubnyi's diary is deposited in the Moscow-based Tsentr Dokumentatsii 'Narodnyi Arkhiv' (TsDNA) f. 30, op. 1, ed. khr. 11–18. Podlubnyi began to keep his diary in 1931, after settling in Moscow, and he kept it up to 1939, when he was arrested for failing to denounce a colleague who was selling factory spare parts on the black market. Podlubnyi spent close to two years in a labor camp, from which he was freed in spring 1941. At that point he continued writing in his diary, and he has kept it up to the present day. Podlubnyi's diary has been published in German (*Tagebuch aus Moskau 1931–1939*, Jochen Hellbeck, ed. (Munich, 1996)); Russian and English editions are forthcoming. Excerpts from the diary have also appeared in *Intimacy and Terror*.

8 I have in mind in particular Sheila Fitzpatrick's contention that the massive promotion (*vydvizhenie*) of workers into managerial positions during the 1930s guaranteed the success of the Stalin revolution. According to Fitzpatrick, the stability of the Stalinist system rested on its capacity to satisfy the material self-interest of an important segment of the population. Aside from the question of whether individual subjectivity can be reduced to rational utilitarianism, Fitzpatrick overlooks the fact that the notion of self-interest on which her argument rests was explicitly denounced in the Soviet system as being selfish, petty-bourgeois, and therefore anti-Soviet (Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, 1979); idem, *The Russian Revolution 1917–1932* (New York, 1982)).

9 Iurii Druzhnikov, a Soviet writer who later emigrated, discovered in the 1970s that Morozov's story had been fabricated at least in part. Among other things his father was not a kulak but the chairman of a rural soviet (Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, pp. 255–6).

10 For an inspiring discussion of this issue, see Oleg Kharkhordin, 'By Deeds Alone: Origins of Individualization in Soviet Russia', paper presented to a conference on 'Private Life in Russia' at the University of Michigan, October 1996.

11 The term 'transparison' is borrowed from Keith Baker, who has identified

this practice as a new style of politics in connection with the French Revolution (Keith Michael Baker, 'A Foucauldian French Revolution?', in *Foucault and the Writing of History*, Jan Goldstein, ed. (Oxford, 1994), pp. 187–204).

12 For a very suggestive re-examination of the concept of totalitarianism in the context of not just the Soviet system, but modern politics in general, see Peter Holquist, 'Information Is the Alpha and Omega of our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context', *Journal of Modern History* v. 69 (September 1997), pp. 415–50; Michael Halberstam, *Liberalism, Totalitarianism and the Aesthetic: an Investigation into the Modern Conception of Politics* (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1996); for the German case, see Michael Geyer, 'The Stigma of Violence, Nationalism, and War in Twentieth-Century Germany', *German Studies Review* (Winter 1992) (Special Issue), pp. 75–110, esp. pp. 91–101.

13 To be sure, this observation equally applies to the identity of the modern subject in general, and thus brings out the uncanny proximity of totalitarianism to the ethos of modernity. As Michel Foucault remarked on the makeup of the modern individual, 'to be modern does not mean to recognize oneself as one is, being in the flow of fleeting moments; it means to view oneself as an object of hard and complex labor' (Michel Foucault, *Freiheit und Selbstsorge* (Frankfurt, 1985), p. 44). I should stress that, by using the term totalitarianism, I do not mean to return to the classic definition of totalitarian rule made by Brzezinski and Friedrich, which in the light of subsequent research has become outdated (Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, 2nd rev. edn (Cambridge, 1965)). I understand totalitarianism along the lines of Hannah Arendt as a movement and a spirit, which derives power primarily from its appeal to the individual to belong and to universalize itself (see also below, note 16).

14 See *Pravda*, 30 December 1933, p. 1, 'Nakanune 1934 goda'.

15 Most of Afinogenov's diary was already published during the Soviet era: A. N. Afinogenov, *Pis'ma, dnevniki (Izbrannoe v dvukh tomakh, t. 2)* (Moscow, 1977). His diary of 1937 and 1938, however, was locked away in the *spetskhran* and became available to researchers only recently (Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva (RGALI) f. 2172, op. 3, ed. khr. 4–5).

16 Hannah Arendt, who wrote the most penetrating analysis of totalitarianism, views self-loss in connection with the phenomenon of individual atomization in the modern world. It is against this background that totalitarianism, with its deceptive promise of belonging and meaning, assumes the power to lure the subject into its deadly embrace. Arendt's analysis of modern subjectivity is rendered somewhat problematic by the fact that she measures it against an ideal state, namely the Aristotelian concept of man. This mars her recognition of processes of subjectivization (and emancipation) which do not fit Arendt's chosen ideal of a *vita activa* (Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) (New York, 1973); idem, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958)).

In a similar way, Laura Engelstein in her brilliant essay on the evolution of Russian legal culture overlooks the potential for subjectivity in an illiberal society. Defining subjectivity strictly in the liberal sense as the body of rights that assure the inviolability of an individual, she argues that after 1917, with the law becoming a tool in the hands of the Soviet state, subjectivity could no longer exist – it turned into 'submission'. In effect, her judgement seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the Foucauldian term of 'subjectivity'. Engelstein understands it as synonymous with the liberal notion of individualism, whereas Foucault had in view the general phenomenon of the modern self, as it is shaped by mechanisms of introspection and self-perfection (Laura Engelstein, 'Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia', *American Historical Review* v. 98, no. 2 (1993), pp. 338–53).

17 A particularly striking case in point is Bukharin's final letter to Stalin of 10 December 1937, which he wrote in detention while awaiting trial. In this letter, Bukharin proclaimed himself innocent, repudiating the confession that he had made earlier to the prosecution's charges of plotting against the Soviet system. Bukharin added, however, that he would have no trouble in confessing to these monstrous accusations, and indeed would 'feel much calmer in [my] soul', if he knew that this confession of imaginary crimes was extracted from him in the service of a larger state interest. What worried Bukharin most was that Stalin might actually believe in the accusations against him ('Prosti menia, Koba . . . Neizvestnoe pis'mo N. Bukharina', *Istochnik*, no. 0 [sic] (1993), pp. 23–5).

Incidentally, Bukharin's letter raises another interesting parallel with Afinogenov's case. Bukharin concluded the letter with a personal confession to Stalin. He listed moments in his past life during which he had indeed been plotting against Stalin's rule, referring to these instances as his 'original sin' (*pervorodnyi grekh*). But he also insisted that he had long ago repudiated these past errors and come to sincerely respect and love Stalin. 'If only there existed an instrument, through which you could see my entire torn and tortured soul', he pleaded. Just like Afinogenov's diary, Bukharin's letter to Stalin can be read as a means to expose the impure soul and as a tool of self-purification. In this respect it is telling that Bukharin apparently wrote daily letters to Stalin from his prison cell in late 1937. (This information was given to me by Gennadii Bordiugov. Bukharin's prison letters to Stalin are deposited in the Russian Presidential Archive, which is still not accessible to most researchers.)

18 Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 17. See also M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York, 1971).

19 Exceptions are Boris Grois, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic, Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton, 1992); Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, 1995). It should be noted, though, that the all-encompassing doctrine for the arts that later would come to be recognized as 'Socialist Realism' for a time was identified by a number of literary spokesmen as 'Revolutionary Romanticism' (Regine Robin, *Socialist Realism: an Impossible Aesthetic* (Stanford, 1992)).

20 The most influential person to argue the destructive impact of the Western Enlightenment program on Russia is of course Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Among Western historians, this view is shared by Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: a History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York, 1994); a related, but much more nuanced argument has been made by Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain.*

21 One major difference between Romantic and Stalinist subjectivity should be pointed out, however briefly. By definition, self-expression in Romanticism could only be attained by chosen individuals of genius (see Lidiia Ginzburg, 'The "Human Document" and the Formation of Character', in *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History,* Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky, eds (Ithaca, 1985), pp. 188–224); in Stalinism, by contrast, it was the state itself, through its reliance on unprecedented methods of intervention and control, that acted on the entire population to express themselves in the Bolshevik mode. To what extent Romantic aspirations were democratized by the Soviet leadership is brought out by Trotsky's statement that 'the average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise.' (Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 256).

22 In his study on Renaissance self-fashioning, Stephan Greenblatt makes a poignant observation on the interrelation of power and freedom in the framing of individual subjectivity. Contrary to his expectations, Greenblatt confesses, none of the autobiographical texts studied by him revealed any trace of 'pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact. If there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force.' However, Greenblatt then makes a qualification which is especially pertinent for an understanding of the Soviet self. To abandon self-fashioning, however conditioned it inevitably is by power, means to 'abandon the craving for freedom, and to let go of one's stubborn hold of selfhood, even selfhood conceived as a fiction, is to die' (Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), p. 257).

Part V

Conclusion

12

European Modernity and Soviet Socialism

David L. Hoffmann

The history of modern Russia has been written as a history distinct from that of 'the West'. And understandably so, for Russia did not follow the path to liberal democracy and industrial capitalism which characterized the political and economic systems of England, France, or the United States. Instead the Russian Empire continued as a Tsarist autocracy until the Revolution of 1917 replaced it with a new social and political order, a socialist system which was quite distinct from Western political and economic systems. Scholarship of the Cold War era highlighted the differences between liberal democracy and Soviet socialism, and either drew parallels with Nazi Germany or focused on the distinctive features of the Soviet experience – Marxist ideology, the Communist Party and its leaders, authoritarian political traditions, cultural revolution and utopianism, the planned economy, political terror, and the overwhelmingly peasant population.

Yet along with the unique features of Soviet history, it is important to consider more universal trends associated with the coming of modernity. A number of aspects of Soviet socialism paralleled developments throughout Europe during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These included the spread of bureaucracy and state control, efforts to manage and mobilize the population, scientism and attempts to rationalize and categorize society, and the rise of mass politics. When we examine these phenomena in a comparative context, it is possible to see that the Soviet Union had a number of features common to modern European political systems, as well as many that were unique to Soviet socialism.

The coming of modernity

Modernity is often defined as the emergence of nation-states, the establishment of parliamentary democracy, and the spread of industrial capitalism in Western Europe. Clearly none of these aspects of modern political and economic systems pertained in the Imperial Russian and Soviet cases. But many facets of Enlightenment thought that were also integral to modernity did pertain and in fact provide insight into the transformations that modern Russia underwent. The belief in progress, the faith in reason, the veneration of science, and the disparagement of religion and tradition were all Enlightenment ideas which characterized the Soviet system and made conceivable government and expert interventions to rationalize social practices. If we broaden our definition of modernity to include this rationalist ethos of progressive social intervention, then we may better explain the range of modern-era proposals to reorder society on a rational basis – proposals still very much contested in late Imperial Russia but accepted and implemented by the Soviet government.

Anthony Giddens identifies a crucial aspect of modernity to be time–space distanciation – the establishment of abstract systems to measure time and space. This process lifted social activity out of its local context and measured it according to a universal grid, which in turn reorganized social relations across large time–space distances. Social life was thus separated from local traditions and reordered on the basis of a rational configuration. More generally, Giddens describes modern institutions as 'deeply bound up with the mechanisms of trust in abstract systems, especially trust in expert systems'.[1] In other words, modern institutions replaced traditional ways with new procedures and norms determined by professionals and government officials on the basis of social scientific or medical knowledge.

As several contributors to this volume point out, attempts to rationalize economic production, categorize the population, and reorder society (based upon scientific or expert knowledge) became increasingly common in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. Indeed the Revolution of 1917 greatly heightened the sense that traditional moral constraints could be cast aside and that society could be entirely remade, based upon a rationalized, even idealized vision of the social order. But lest we assume that the impulse to reorder society was strictly the product of revolutionary or utopian thinking, it is worth noting that throughout Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there occurred the spread of what might be termed scientism – an effort to organize all political, social, and economic relations according to scientifically determined norms. Increasingly experts, be they state officials or non-state professionals, displaced interest group politics as the arbiters of the public good. Science became a source of legitimacy for policies and political programs that were no longer recognized as politics, and thus were above popular debate.

While the authoritarian ramifications of scientism are clear, our description of modernity must also account for the rise of mass politics which also occurred in this period. As the ideal of popular sovereignty gradually spread following the French Revolution, the involvement of the masses in politics and in warfare became essential. Once sovereignty came to be seen as resting with the people, the entire population had to be involved to legitimate governmental policies or military campaigns. This involvement did not necessarily have to be democratic, as later Nazi rallies and Soviet demonstrations showed, but it was important both to invoke, and to involve 'the people'. As Hitler himself stated, politics would no longer be accomplished with a handshake. Instead politics had to take place on a mass scale, had to be visual, had to employ myths to galvanize the population, and had to transform and mobilize the consciousness of the masses. Many Soviet programs reflected the rise of mass politics – propaganda posters, literacy campaigns, mass marches and demonstrations – and marked a participatory, but non-democratic form of politics.

Ironically, at the very moment when modern rationalism was destroying traditions, the demands of mass politics led to the creation of invented traditions. Governments throughout Europe and around the world utilized the emotional and mobilizational power of traditional appeals and symbols, themselves disembedded from their original context and recast for political purposes.[2] Fascist regimes in particular, but democratic and socialist governments as well, resorted to distinctly anti-modern themes (the folk, the purity of rural life, the traditional family), but did so using modern means and for modern mobilizational purposes. The institution of the family, while glorified in Nazi Germany, democratic France, and the Soviet Union alike, was not championed as a bulwark against state intervention but rather as an instrument to produce healthy citizens for the good of society as a whole. Martin's contribution to this volume gives another such example of neo-traditionalism in the

Soviet government's promotion of folk culture beginning in the 1930s. The Soviet government was similar to other European governments, then, in its promotion of a certain version of traditional symbols and institutions, for distinctly modern purposes of disciplining and mobilizing the population.

In Russia the overwhelming majority of the population came from the least modern, most traditional social group – the peasantry. The Russian intelligentsia had long contemplated how to ameliorate the lives of the downtrodden masses. With the exception of some Populists, there was a broad consensus among the Marxist and non-Marxist intelligentsia alike that the peasantry had to be transformed, modernized, and integrated into larger economic and political structures. A range of pre-revolutionary elites shared common perceptions of peasant backwardness and irrationality, and were prepared to intervene, often in authoritarian ways, to replace peasant superstition and autarky with rationalized and modernized lifestyles. Granted this was a certain type of modernity, for most of the Russian intelligentsia harbored strong anti-capitalist sentiments. But it was modernity they sought nonetheless, complete with expert systems of agricultural management, the spread of education, literacy, and the replacement of tradition with reason in the arena of human affairs.

Of particular interest is the focus on transforming human beings and their consciousness. For some members of the intelligentsia, this transformation amounted to a civilizing process by which the dark masses would become enlightened, cultured human beings. But, as Kotsonis argues in the introduction, the remaking of peasants also involved their integration into larger political structures, no longer as passive subjects of the Tsar but as conscious citizens, who in the age of mass warfare would be called upon to join the nation in arms and to defend the national interest.

The mental transformations necessary to produce loyal citizens and the physical preparations required to produce fit soldiers spurred new forms of state intervention to buttress the loyalty, health, and discipline of the population. Several contributors describe this process in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia. Schrader highlights the concern that Tsarist officials had with control over the bodies and minds of Siberian exiles. She also demonstrates that the branding of exiles symbolically established them as negative others against whom loyal citizens were defined. Bernstein and Pinnow both explore the medical and scientific management of society in the Soviet period. Hellbeck describes the mental transformations accomplished through the internalization of official Soviet discourse on enlightenment. His study of a 1930s diary reveals ways that individuals read themselves into the Soviet system of power and adopted self-practices to make themselves into conscious citizens. Alexopoulos finds the utilization of official Soviet rhetoric and categories even among petitions of individuals who had been disenfranchised by the Soviet government. Imperial and Soviet penal codes, medical procedures, self-practices, and official rhetoric all sought to transform individuals and to discipline the population as a whole.

Again it is important to put these disciplinary and mobilizational efforts in their pan-European context, as similar processes took place across Europe. In the broadest sense, these efforts represented an attempt to manage and order societies in a rational and productive way. This type of thinking contributed to the view that the population was a resource, to be mobilized and utilized for maximum effect. While the requirements of mass warfare loomed large in the minds of European political leaders, population policies also arose from other modern phenomena – industrialization, urbanization, imperialism, and social Darwinism.

Since the seventeenth century, European monarchs had understood that their political and military power depended not only upon their ability to collect taxes, but also upon the overall economic prosperity of the territory they ruled. This realization underlay efforts to police societies, enhance their productive capacities, and systematize governmental administration in a way that would encourage economic development. In the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution enormously expanded both the wealth and military power of European countries, but it also generated new social problems associated with urbanization. Governments responded with industrial regulations and social welfare programs to safeguard the productive capacity of the workforce. As a prominent Italian jurist wrote, 'the bodily integrity, health, and physical resistance of the worker constitute a "good" that must be protected, not only and not principally for individual ends, but for the ends of the superior interest of the Nation.'[3]

The rise of imperialism and social Darwinism in the nineteenth century also contributed to modern population politics and practices. As European countries conquered and colonized the peoples of Africa and Asia, they sought to impose their own social as well as administrative order. Efforts to 'civilize' the African and Asian masses were preceded by attempts to categorize and control them, using whatever coercive means necessary. The Russian Imperial experience in a similar way precipitated efforts to subdue, catalogue, and ultimately educate and transform the peoples of the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia. As the contribution by Steinwedel demonstrates, ethnographic studies of territories colonized by the Tsarist government created ethnic categories, and along with these came the assumption of (dormant) national consciousness. Knight points out that in Russia, nationality was grafted onto pre-existing concepts (such as *narodnost'*), which emphasized folk culture over the idea of the political nation. His work finds an interesting parallel in Martin's article on the Soviet turn toward folk culture and primordial conceptions of nationality. In both the Imperial and Soviet cases the construction of ethnic and national categories had enormous political implications, as citizens were increasingly labeled and subjected to policies based on their nationality.

Social Darwinism also contributed to the imperialist mentality that pervaded the thought of many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European political leaders. Throughout Europe there developed a sense of peoples, nations, and races in a struggle with one another to propagate and dominate the world. Mussolini declared that Italy must become an empire, and that if it did not, it would be doomed to become a colony. This type of thinking provoked great concern with the size and health of the population, in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. Government concerns in the modern era with managing the population prompted new policies and practices that contributed to the rise of the interventionist welfare state.

Population management and the welfare state

Twentieth-century government interventions intended to effect social, psychological, or even biological transformations of the population can only be understood in the broader context of the decline of traditional liberalism and individualism and the rise of what one scholar has termed 'the social' – a new realm created in the late nineteenth century when a variety of problems were grouped together and acted on by a body of governmental officials and qualified personnel in fields of medicine, social work, demography, urban planning, and social hygiene.[4] No longer were societies understood as a collection of autonomous actors. Instead they were conceived as entities that could be mapped statistically, reordered and cultivated, and administered scientifically by experts who stood above the rights of individuals or the interests of specific social groups.

The rise of the social is perhaps most easily seen in the response of governments and experts to industrialization and urbanization. A wide range of government officials, urban planners, social reformers, and medical personnel, while motivated by different philosophies, became concerned with common problems of housing, hygiene, disease prevention, industrial accidents, alcoholism, unemployment, poverty, and social unrest. A consensus developed that the health and welfare of the population was best protected by enforcement of behavioral norms dictated by experts, and that these norms were clearly a matter of state interest and ultimately national security. The result was a flurry of government regulation and welfare programs beginning in the late nineteenth century which, during the twentieth century, culminated in the establishment of the welfare state.

The rise of the welfare state occurred in different ways and at different rates throughout Europe. The shift toward what was termed modern and rational public provision began in Germany when Bismarck introduced his compulsory sickness insurance system in 1883; by 1914 a well-developed bureaucracy and a growing medical profession were administering German welfare programs. In England the piecemeal creation of the welfare state began with reforms enacted in 1906 and culminated in the introduction of socialized medicine in 1945.[5] Russia was clearly a latecomer to state welfare programs, but already in the late Imperial period the creation of factory inspectorates and the emphasis among doctors on social medicine presaged more far-reaching programs. During the First World War, Russian health officials began to create the Main Administration for State Health Protection, a project that came to fruition shortly after the October Revolution when the Commissariat of Health was established.[6] By the 1930s, the Soviet government assumed control of all social welfare functions, from medical care and housing, to sanitation and rest home visits, as the Soviet Union took on a socialist and authoritarian form of the welfare state.[7]

Throughout Europe the interventionist welfare state resulted from new forms of knowledge, new goals of government, and new technologies of social control. In order not to lose sight of human agency in this explanation, it is important to emphasize that a range of political leaders, government officials, and professionals both sought and were in turn influenced by these new forms of knowledge. In their quest to order society rationally and scientifically, they strove to know the population statistically. Once people and social phenomena had been classified and enumerated, government officials and professionals came to conceptualize society and social problems in a different way. Pinnow's chapter provides one important example of a 'science of society' that employed statistics to conceptualize and 'solve' social problems, and many other examples could be added as well. Whereas poverty had previously been viewed as the failings of isolated individuals, the compilation of statistics presented poverty as a social problem that called out for the establishment of state welfare agencies and social work to transform the impoverished into productive citizens. Likewise industrial accidents, which previously were considered random phenomena that resulted from individual error, came to be seen as regular and predictable events once statistics had been compiled. Governments began to increase factory regulation and require employers to obtain insurance to cover accidents.[8]

Knowledge of the population's military capacity emerged as a major state project. Officers and strategists throughout Europe became concerned with the quantity and quality of young men. Those drafted into the army were given physical examinations in assembly-line fashion in order to measure their physical characteristics. The objectification of recruits' bodies promoted the view that soldiers were physical raw material to be measured, categorized, processed, and utilized for maximum military benefit. This type of thinking contributed directly to the massive slaughter of the First World War when, for example at the Battle of Verdun, German military commanders purposely wasted hundreds of thousands of human bodies in an attempt not to win the battle, but to bleed the enemy white.

Already in the nineteenth century, the statistical study of the population of the Russian Empire was highly developed, particularly in the realm of military statistics. As Peter Holquist has pointed out, the mass of military statistics compiled by the Tsarist government in the second half of the nineteenth century 'sought to convert the vast population of the Empire into a hierarchy of discrete segments ("elements") according to their purported political reliability and utility to the Russian state'.[9] The Tsarist government also gathered information on the physical condition of the population overall. In 1913 the Ministry of Internal Affairs produced a report on public health that included statistics on the population's average height and weight in various cities and regions. The Soviet government continued and elaborated this process, amassing mountains of statistics on the health of the population, the prevalence of diseases, the loss of workers' productive capacity due to injury, and so forth.[10]

The interdependency of new forms of knowledge and new goals of government becomes clear when we examine public health programs which accompanied the gathering of data on the physical well-being of the population. To take the example of epidemiology, when medical professionals learned about the spread of tuberculosis in the late nineteenth century, government officials and doctors alike adopted a collectivist and interventionist approach to disease prevention and hygiene. No longer was it sufficient to treat patients on an individual basis; epidemiologists called for medical surveillance, public hygiene programs, and other technocratic strategies to control the spread of diseases.[11]

To political leaders and social reformers throughout Europe, medical science and technocratic health management offered an appealing alternative to the complexities of coalition politics and democratic reform. Social health and social science more generally, as elaborated by experts and enforced by government bureaucrats, represented a superordinate authority that provided incontestable solutions to social problems. In Imperial Russia, the picture was complicated by zemstvo physicians' opposition to the Tsarist autocracy and their conviction that health care was best administered through community medicine. Nonetheless they shared the same emphasis on social medicine that emerged in late nineteenth-century Western Europe.[12] Individualist approaches to health and hygiene were superseded by a stress on the collective welfare of society.

Under the Soviet government, public health care took on a far more centralized character, which continued to focus on society as a whole rather than on the individual. This focus resulted in medicine's penetration into schools, factories, and families, and in the idea that responsibility for one's health and hygiene was a social obligation.[13] Developments in bacteriology and epidemiology raised awareness about the spread of disease, and led to greater policing of people's homes. Soviet health officials increased sanitary inspections of workers' living and working conditions, and showed broad concern with urban air quality, workers' and peasants' sanitary habits, and the overall health and productive capacity of the population.[14] And as Bernstein shows in her contribution to this volume, medical professionals studied glandular transplants as a means of reclaiming deviants for the overall social good. All these interventionist policies mirrored similar practices developed throughout Europe and advocated by social reformers, doctors, and government officials alike.[15] Backed by scientific and medical expertise, and in the name of preserving the overall health and well-being of the society, nation, or race, authorities chose to intervene in people's lives to dictate norms of health, hygiene, and behavior.

Governments became interested not only in preserving the health of the population, but in improving it and even in achieving a biosocial transformation. The increasing concern with child health in the early twentieth century reflected not only humanitarian impulses, but state concerns about the size and capacity of the population. In Germany, economists began to calculate the economic value of each life, and presented infant mortality as a drain on the national economy.[16] French concerns with a decline in the national birthrate dated from the mid-nineteenth century, and intensified following loss of the Franco-Prussian War and even further with the horrendous losses of the First World War. In response, the French government enacted a comprehensive pronatalist program to try to increase the birthrate.[17] Similar concerns and movements in Britain and the United States resulted in government programs and funding to educate mothers, provide family allowances, and increase the birthrate and the overall population.[18] The enormous pronatalist campaign launched by the Soviet government in 1936 can only be understood in this broader context. Nikolai Semashko, the Commissar of Health, justified the 1936 ban on abortion as crucial to 'the state task of increasing the population of the Soviet Union'. He went on to compare the fertility rate of the Soviet Union with those of other industrialized countries, and argued that the abortion ban would allow the country to maintain or even increase its superior birthrate.[19]

Governments became concerned with increasing the quality as well as the quantity of their populations. Eugenics, which gained currency in countries around the world in the early twentieth century, seemed to offer a biological solution to problems of societal cohesion and improvement. Eugenicists believed that by rooting out mental and physical degeneracy (and in the case of Nazi eugenicists, racial degeneracy as well), they could transform and radically improve the population. In 1907 the state of Indiana passed a law that allowed sterilization of the 'degenerate', and in 1927 the United

States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of compulsory sterilization. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote that states had the right to require citizens who were economic burdens on society to make 'lesser sacrifices' for the greater good.[20] In the Soviet Union, despite socialist ideology's emphasis on environmental over biological determinants of human nature, a strong eugenics movement developed in the 1920s. Ideology did play a large role in the 1930 denunciation of Soviet eugenicists as 'bourgeois' and 'fascist', but while their institute was disbanded, many continued their work as geneticists even into the postwar period.[21]

With the growing authority of science, and of physiology in particular, it is not surprising that biological and corporeal metaphors came to pervade discussions of how to organize and improve societies. While references to 'the social body' dated from the writings of ancient Greek philosophers, corporeal metaphors in the twentieth century were used to support new government technologies of social intervention throughout Europe.[22] Once individuals in society were conceived of as mere cells in a larger organism, then their excision could be justified as serving the larger social good. Soviet and Nazi rhetoric alike was replete with images of disease, infection, and the need to purify, transform, and improve society. As Zygmunt Bauman has argued, 'Stalin's and Hitler's victims . . . were killed because they did not fit, for one reason or another, the scheme of a perfect society.'[23]

Bauman also points out that modern civilization, while it did not make the Holocaust inevitable, did make the Holocaust possible, with its bureaucratic procedures and categories, its sense of mission and history making, and its view of society as something to be rationally managed, improved, or transformed.[24] Similarly, when we examine Stalinism, we cannot ignore the fact that modern forms of knowledge, modern goals of government, and modern technologies of social intervention, made possible, even if they did not cause, the horrors of collectivization, forced industrialization, the purges, and deportations of national minorities. Moreover many less horrific, yet nonetheless interventionist, features of Soviet socialism cannot be understood outside the more general emergence of new technologies for the management of societies. As Holquist emphasizes in his contribution, surveillance was a modern technology employed by governments throughout Europe beginning in the First World War as a means to know and mobilize society. Censuses, surveillance, housing inspections, urban planning, health campaigns and eugenics programs all represented modern technologies and policies that infringed upon individual rights in the name of greater social or national interests.

The role of socialist ideology

By placing Russian and Soviet history in a pan-European context, we have identified a number of features common to overall trends in European modernity. The attempt to order society in a rational and productive way, the prestige of science and the reliance on social science or even biosocial approaches to solve societal problems, the combination of new forms of social science knowledge with new goals of government and new technologies of social intervention – all of these characterized not only Soviet socialism, but governments and societies throughout Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But we should be careful not to equate all systems and ideologies of modern Europe. In particular, a distinction should be made between states that had an explicit ideological mission, and those that, while they had social and mobilizational concerns, were not overtly ideological. In liberal democratic systems, even as the state, the medical profession, and social science experts encroached upon personal liberties in the name of the larger national interest, no grand ideological claims about making history were articulated and no massive social engineering projects undertaken.

As Knight states in his chapter, one token of modernity is a sense of historical awareness – a conception of one's place along a path of historical development. While this mode of thinking was a product of the Enlightenment, it became even more pronounced in Marxism, with its stress on historical epochs and teleological progression. Soviet leaders' efforts to transform the population derived from their sense of history making and of progress toward a Communist utopia. It is not surprising that the writing of the history of the October Revolution itself, as analyzed by Corney in this volume, assumed such importance for the Bolsheviks. The events of October had to be infused with meaning through a narrative of 'revolution' to legitimize not only the Soviet government but also its policies of revolutionary transformation.

Socialist ideology also had a crucial role in shaping the interventionist policies that were enacted. While the Soviet Union's social welfare policies, economic consolidation and planning, and machine age utopianism were all common to European progressive modernity, these policies were enacted within an ideological system of militant anti-capitalism.[25] This class-based ideology not only led to the virtual elimination of private property, it also influenced the type of population politics that the Soviet government practiced. If all governments became concerned with the health of the social body, and some began to excise what they viewed as malignant elements, it is still a vital distinction that the Soviet government did this on a class basis, rather than using biological or racial criteria.[26]

An emphasis on the role of socialist ideology helps to distinguish features unique to Soviet socialism from those common to modern European political systems. At the same time, it would be wrong to draw too sharp a distinction between modern politics and socialist ideology. Socialism itself was one of the many ideological products of European modernity. And many of its features, from its concern with economic exploitation and the unequal distribution of wealth, to its goals of societal reordering and social harmony, stemmed from modern European thought (the Enlightenment) and modern economic development (the industrial revolution). Socialism's stress on the collective and its teleological conception of progress matched trends throughout Europe which privileged national interests over those of the individual, and did so in the name of improving society as a whole.

To conclude this discussion of modernity and socialism, it is worth (though highly speculative) adding a few observations about postmodernity, the label often given to our present epoch. If we accept that socialism was an ideology of modernity, then we have a clue to its demise in the postmodern era. The Soviet command economy possessed certain advantages in the modern industrial age (with its ability to mobilize labor and resources for large-scale mining and steel mill operations), but it performed sluggishly in the post-industrial age, when economic growth shifted to the technology and service sectors (where innovation and flexibility were at a premium). In a similar way, many tenets of socialism, which had seemed to offer solutions to modern social problems, were no longer viable or accepted in the postmodern era. Partly due to the horrors of Stalinism, people came to suspect any totalizing ideology, any attempts at social engineering, and any use of coercive means toward utopian ends.

Other phenomena, too, have eroded the foundations of progressive social modernity in the minds of political leaders, social thinkers, and the public as a whole. Science and scientism, while still central to European culture, have ceased to command people's unquestioning faith. Science, after all, provided both the justification (race science) and the means (Zyklon B gas) of the Holocaust. It supplied the theoretical postulates and practical knowledge necessary for atomic weaponry. Industrial technology, while it fueled enormous economic advances, also precipitated disastrous ecological consequences. Activists in the environmental movement responded to widespread pollution, the exploitation of natural resources, and nuclear-power accidents by questioning humankind's right and ability to reshape the world through science and technology. With the acceptance of Einstein's theory of relativity and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, scientists themselves called into question the absolute, rational universe of modern science. Moreover, theorists and critics of science and social science have revealed that neither enterprise is purely objective, and that both employ interpretive frameworks riddled with biases.

Along with this growing mistrust of scientific authority and social science expertise, there has been an erosion of confidence in governments' ability to manage economies and solve social problems. Trends throughout the world, from Thatcherism to Reaganism to privatization programs in developing countries, indicate that the demise of the state-managed economy and authoritarian welfare policies of the Soviet Union reflect a more general turn away from the faith in rational government management of society that characterized the modern era. In part due to bureaucratic rigidity (especially apparent in the Soviet state planning agency's inability to adjust to the post-industrial economy), people have come to see government management as inefficient or even as the cause of economic and social problems. Simultaneously, policy-makers have had less reason to expend resources on the health and welfare of the body social. In the modern era, a healthy and disciplined population was essential to the demands of industrial labor and mass warfare, but in the postmodern era, robotic production has increasingly superseded corporeal labor, and computerized weaponry has obviated the need for mass armies of physically fit soldiers. Perhaps not coincidentally many historians and social theorists themselves have turned away from sociological studies of labor, and now (in the telecommunications age) focus instead on language, semiotics, and symbolic communication.[27]

Soviet socialism responded to many of the challenges and aspirations of European modernity. It contained an ambition to refashion society, through educational, psychosocial, biosocial, and baldly coercive means. It legitimated government and expert intervention in people's lives as part of a utopian attempt to solve all problems and achieve social harmony. And like other modern European states, the Soviet government strove to categorize, reshape, discipline, and mobilize its population to meet the needs of industrial labor and mass warfare. But when those needs shifted in the postmodern era, Soviet socialism had little to offer, save its own morally bankrupt legacy of coercion in the name of unattainable ideals.

Notes

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1 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, 1990), pp. 53, 83.

2 See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1992).

3 David Horn, *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity* (Princeton, 1994), p. 41. The Soviet Union was not alone in declaring productive work to be a social obligation. A work charter issued in Italy in 1927 also declared work to be a 'social duty'. Ibid., p. 40.

4 Ibid., pp. 3–11.

5 Maria Sophia Quine, *Population Politics in Twentieth-Century Europe: Fascist Dictatorships and Liberal Democracies* (New York, 1996), p. 102.

6 John F. Hutchinson, '"Who Killed Cock Robin?" An Inquiry into the Death of Zemstvo Medicine', in Susan Gross Solomon and Hutchinson, eds, *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington, 1990), pp. 16–20.

7 As Stephen Kotkin writes, the Soviet system was 'state-centered social welfare in its extreme, or socialist incarnation'. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 23.

8 Horn, *Social Bodies*, pp. 35–7.

9 See Peter Holquist, '"Conduct Merciless Mass Terror": Decossackization on the Don, 1919', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, v. 38, nos 1–2 (janvier–juin 1997), p. 131.

10 See, for example, I. A. Kraval, ed., *Zdorov'e i zdravookhraneniia trudiashchikhsia SSSR: Stat. sbornik*, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1937), which includes 1913 Ministry of the Interior statistics; results of the 1930 all-union health census conducted by the Central Administration of Economic Accounting under Gosplan; and additional data compiled by the Department of Population and Health of the Central Administration of Economic Accounting.

11 An 1890s diagnostic test for tuberculosis revealed that 95 per cent of

the German population had traces of the bacillus, and extensive interventionist programs were implemented to deal with this epidemiological threat. See P. Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 163.

12 See Hutchinson, '"Who Killed Cock Robin"'.

13 The social hygiene movement within the Soviet health establishment focused on the social conditions which fostered disease and proposed social measures to improve the health of the population; see Susan Gross Solomon, 'Social Hygiene and Soviet Public Health, 1921–1930', in Solomon and Hutchinson, eds, *Health and Society*. On similar trends in Western Europe, see Horn, *Social Bodies*, pp. 43–5.

14 See, for example, *Gigiena i sotsialisticheskoe zdravookhranenie*, nos 2–3 (1932).

15 Housing surveys in late nineteenth-century Germany linked tuberculosis to poor ventilation and overcrowded living conditions, and specialists also blamed immoral behavior for the spread of disease. In response, local public health societies, which brought together doctors, scientists, engineers, and municipal officials, championed the extension of medical and policing powers to uphold morality and public health. See Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, pp. 157–65.

16 Ibid., p. 188.

17 Quine, *Population Politics*, pp. 52–3. See also William Schneider, 'Toward the Improvement of the Human Race: the History of Eugenics in France', *Journal of Modern History*, v. 54 (1982), pp. 15–17.

18 See Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: the Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 511; Jane Lewis, 'Models of Equality for Women: the Case of State Support for Children in Twentieth-Century Britain', in Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, eds, *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare State, 1880s–1950s* (New York, 1991), p. 85.

19 N. A. Semashko, 'Zamechatel'nyi zakon (o zapreshchenii aborta'), *Front nauki i tekhniki*, no. 7 (1936), p. 38.

20 Quine, *Population Politics*, pp. 116–17.

21 See Mark B. Adams, 'Eugenics as Social Medicine in Revolutionary Russia', in Solomon and Hutchinson, eds, *Health and Society*.

22 Horn, *Social Bodies*, pp. 14–25.

23 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, 1991), p. 92.

24 Bauman, pp. 12–18. He also points out the pervasiveness of gardening metaphors, where productive social elements are like crops to be cultivated and bad ones like weeds to be exterminated, as reflective of the impulse to manage society rationally in the modern era.

25 Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, pp. 19–20, 32–3.

26 See Holquist, 'Conduct', pp. 131, 152.

27 Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York, 1990), p. 299.

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